



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

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## **THESIS**

**BULGARIAN NATIONAL SECURITY AND SPECIAL  
OPERATIONS**

by

Roman Hristov

December 2006

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Peter Gustaitis  
Kalev Sepp

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**BULGARIAN NATIONAL SECURITY AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

Roman Hristov  
Captain, Bulgarian Army Special Operations Forces  
M.A., Bulgarian Military Academy “Vassil Levski,” 1997

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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December 2006**

Author: Roman Hristov

Approved by: Peter Gustaitis  
Thesis Advisor

Kalev Sepp  
Second Reader/Co-Advisor

Gordon McCormick  
Chairman, Department of Defense Analysis

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the nature of Bulgarian national security and how it is supported by Bulgarian Special Operations Forces (BSOF). It examines the changing global security environment and its implications on Bulgarian security challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In particular, the global war on terror and the newly acquired NATO membership have posed new challenges for the Bulgarian Armed Forces, including BSOF. This thesis explores Bulgarian security strategy and NATO requirements for special operations, and analyzes how each of these may be satisfied, in part, by BSOF. The shortfalls between Bulgarian and NATO needs and BSOF's current capabilities suggest that BSOF should be unified under a single joint Special Operations Command directly subordinated to the highest commanding headquarters of the Bulgarian Armed Forces. Moreover, BSOF should be provided with an independent funding program with dedicated air and maritime assets for strategic support, and with advanced SOF--specific equipment.

This study suggests the necessity for reorganization and improvement of BSOF in response to the requirements of national security and NATO Special Operations requirements. It posits that a restructuring and enhancement of BSOF is likely to strengthen Bulgarian national security, as well as contributing to an improvement in the global security environment.

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of First Lieutenant Nikolay Saryev and Warrant Officer Anton Petrov -- the first Bulgarian special operators lost in the war on terror in Iraq.

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

An analysis of Bulgarian national security in the context of official civilian and military documents found that asymmetric threats such as terrorism, the transportation of nuclear materials and weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the resurgence of radical Islamism, and low intensity conflicts in close proximity to the state are the most probable security risks for Bulgaria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Annual National Security Report, 2006). Furthermore, the same documents indirectly implied that Bulgarian Special Operations Forces (BSOF) are the principal military asset capable of addressing these contemporary threats. In addition to this implication, the Bulgarian Concept for Establishment, Development, and Employment of Special Operations Forces (CEDESOF) directly assigns BSOF to missions which, to a considerable extent, anticipate the aforementioned security risks. In general, BSOF should be a rapid-reaction and flexible military asset capable of providing a low or high-profile response in the interest of national or allied security without involving other Bulgarian Armed Forces.

As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Bulgaria's Armed Forces, particularly BSOF, should be ready to respond to all challenges that threaten the allied nations. The integration of the Bulgarian military into NATO can only be successful through the achievement of full interoperability with other nation's forces, which include a collective NATO SOF (NSOF). Presently, BSOF is less likely to properly address the latter expectations. The analysis in this thesis of the organization, employment, and management of BSOF provides several reasons for its inability to be a reliable guardian for Bulgarian national security. The subordination of Bulgarian Special Forces to the armed services of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, the lack of a unified Special Operations Command with organic projection assets, and the inadequate funding for these forces are the factors which prevent BSOF from being a viable rapid-reaction military asset. Moreover, the historical experience of the United States Special Operations Forces (USSOF), the analysis of the latest U.S. and NATO Special

Operations doctrine, and the trends for future management of SOF worldwide prove that BSOF is inappropriately organized, managed, and employed.

Being assigned as a major military force in support of Bulgarian national security, BSOF is expected to carry out crucially important and complex missions within Bulgaria and abroad. This can only be achieved if BSOF is properly reorganized, managed, equipped, and employed. The conclusions of this thesis recommend that Bulgarian Special Forces should be unified under a single joint command directly subordinated to the highest Bulgarian military authority responsible for strategic planning – the General Staff. This proposed command should be provided with organic aerial and maritime assets for strategic projection and with an independent funding program. Through these changes, not only will BSOF address the major requirements for NSOF, but it will also become a significant military asset for Bulgarian national and global security.

## **B. METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The basic analytical method used by the author in this study is the systems analysis approach. “Systems analysis is the science dealing with analysis of complex, large scale systems and the interactions within those systems” (Wikipedia, 2006). The method examines “. . . the role of a proposed system and the identification of the requirements that it should meet. It is the starting point for system design. [Through detailed analysis,] the system’s analysts are responsible for identifying requirements and producing a design” (Free-On Line Dictionary Of Computing, 1996).

This thesis analyzes Bulgarian national security by identifying the requirements it imposes upon military and law-enforcement agencies, particularly BSOF. Discussing the organization, management, and employment of BSOF, the author outlines its present capabilities. Finally, after the discovered shortfalls between the requirements of the national security and the current capabilities of BSOF have been examined, recommendations for future reorganization and development of BSOF are proposed. The suggested improvements address all documented shortfalls.

Chapter II of the study begins with the analysis of the Bulgarian security environment and the examination of the probable national security risks. The major



source of information in Chapter II is the Bulgarian National Security Concept (NSC) and the Annual National Security Report (ANSR) for 2005.

In Chapter III, the author analyzes the Bulgarian National Security Strategy with its domestic and foreign priorities as detailed in the government documents studied in Chapter II. The trends in the national security policy are clarified by Vayrynen's theory for small states and the changing global environment. The Bulgarian Military Strategy (MS) is the next major topic of interest for Chapter III; it is supported by the Bulgarian Military Doctrine (MD) and by the military section in the ANSR. The thesis outlines present and future trends in Bulgarian military policy in the context of contemporary internal security concerns and external NATO membership requirements.

After outlining basic military doctrinal standards, the author analyzes the role of BSOF in both national and military strategies in Chapter IV. Based on the NSC, ANSR, MS, MD, and CEDESOF, the thesis reveals how BSOF could be better employed in the interest of Bulgarian national security. The conclusions are based on Taillon's counterterrorism theory and Cohen's findings on special forces.

Chapter V deals with the prospects for the development of NATO SOF, as outlined in the studies of Binnendijk, Gompert, and Kugler, Gompert, and Smith. Further, the author discusses allied standards for special operations based on the information found in the Allied Joint Doctrine (AJP-01 (B)). This discussion sets the stage for Chapter VI.

Chapter VI identifies and analyzes the shortfalls between the requirements of Bulgarian national security, NATO standards, and the capabilities of BSOF. The assessment of the problem is supported by examples of the historical experiences of U.S. SOF provided by authors like Vandenbrucke, Cohen, Adams, and Marquis. The U.S. Doctrine for Joint Special Operations--Joint Publication 3-05--is a useful and credible source for sustaining the principles for special operations outlined in AJP-01 (B). Alternatively, the Bulgarian CEDESOF reveals the doctrinal limitations of Bulgarian Special Operations policy. Some of the bureaucratic phenomena of the Bulgarian Armed

Forces are explained using the organizational theories of Mintzberg, Bolman and Deal, as well as Allison's organizational behavior model.

In conclusion, Chapter VII wraps up the analysis and provides recommendations to the Bulgarian politico-military leadership for the essential transformation of BSOF in response to the identified shortfalls. The study ends with the prospects for the future development of BSOF and the necessity for further studies on the problem that consider the significance of special operations and BSOF for Bulgarian national and global security.

### **C. BACKGROUND**

Bulgaria has not responded fully to the new threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is particularly true with regards to the development of a special operations capability. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the global security environment changed considerably. Although smaller nations like Bulgaria are probably less affected by the change, they still share the burden of contemporary asymmetric threats. At the same time, the Bulgarian leadership has recognized the need for full integration of the state into global political and military organizations such as NATO and the European Union (EU). Small states are more concerned for their security and, therefore, are willing to join global economic or military organizations. Becoming part of such unions defines the political orientation of Bulgaria; it shares the values of the member states and anticipates the same security risks. The participation of the country in NATO and the EU poses new political, economic, and military challenges for its leadership. Consequently, Bulgarian authorities align national legislation and reform the armed forces in accordance with the potential security threats for the state and the integration requirements of NATO. Based on the Bulgarian NSC, MS, and MD, the Long-Term Vision for the Development of the Armed Forces (LTVDAF) outlines the major framework for military transformation of the Bulgarian Armed Forces. Demonstrating readiness to support allied operations abroad, Bulgaria has deployed its forces in various countries, including Afghanistan and Iraq. Anticipating future national or allied crisis response deployments, the Bulgarian military should be

well organized, trained, and equipped. All these requirements are even more important for BSOF, especially in a security environment dominated by asymmetric and irregular threats.

In 2000, the Bulgarian military leadership approved a new concept for Special Operations – CEDESOF. With some exceptions, the document is in general accord with the trends of the development of SOF of Western countries. Although CEDESOF defines BSOF as the most important military asset in response to the risks for Bulgarian national security, the organization is limited by military bureaucratic arrangements that negatively affect its operational capabilities. With the CEDESOF, Bulgarian military authorities tried to modernize BSOF, but after five years it became obvious that the concept is limited and the special operations policy of the national politico-military leadership is insufficient.

#### **D. LIMITATIONS**

This study is based on the information provided by the aforementioned official Bulgarian concepts, strategies, and doctrine. Almost all of the sources, except ANSR, date from 1998 and were amended in 2002. Some of the documents, such as the LTVDBAF, are classified. Therefore, the analyses in this thesis are relatively limited by the lack of updated information on Bulgarian national security and military strategy as well as the role of BSOF in these strategies. Moreover, a new Bulgarian National Security Strategy is expected to be developed in 2007. Such a document will require updating and the synchronization with all dependent political and military documents related to national security, including CEDESOF.

In 2007, the Bulgarian military leadership is expected to release a new Doctrine for Special Operations. Furthermore, the membership of Bulgaria in NATO and the EU will impose a number of strict requirements for the armed forces and the national law-enforcement agencies. NATO authorities are also working on the development of a new Doctrine for Special Operations – Allied Joint Publication 3.5. Therefore, the anticipated changes in future Bulgarian security and military policy could diminish the relevance of this study. However, considering the lack of discussions on the issues related to BSOF in Bulgarian politico-military circles, this thesis constitutes an academic basis for further

analytical debates. It is the hope of the author that this study will assist in the development of the new Bulgarian National Security Strategy.

## **II. BULGARIAN SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

### **A. A SHORT HISTORY OF BULGARIA**

Bulgaria is one of the oldest European states. Its territories lie in the Balkan Peninsula and its borders have been altered many times. The native population is a mixture of local Slavic and Bulgarian tribes who have long traditions living close to the Volga and Cama Rivers. In the seventh century the Bulgarian tribes moved to the Balkan Peninsula by crossing the Danube River from the north. The Slavs and the Bulgarians made an alliance and signed their first peace treaty in 681 A.D., which is considered the year of the establishment of the Bulgarian state. Though of a clan minority, the Bulgarian aristocracy became the state-forming element and enjoyed a political dominance over the Slavic majority. Soon after state formation, however, the Bulgarians were culturally assimilated by the Slavs, which formed a unified socio-political national entity.

The period between 681 A.D. and 1018 A.D. comprised the First Bulgarian Kingdom. The newly founded Bulgarian state managed to preserve its independence by defeating, on several occasions, the armies of the Byzantium Empire, the Crusaders, and numerous barbarian tribes. In 865 A.D., the Bulgarians converted to Christianity. It was an important moment that would lead to an official recognition of the state as tsardom by the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire. The Bulgarian Prince Simeon was crowned the tsar of all Bulgarians. At the same time, the Bulgarian state developed its first alphabet and all official documents were translated into the old Bulgarian language. This alphabet today is known as the Cyrillic script, and it is used by several states in Eastern Europe. It had a major impact on the administrative and cultural development of the state, and more importantly, on the Bulgarian independence from the Byzantium influence. In 1018 A.D., the Byzantine Emperor conquered the Bulgarian state and made it a subjugated province.

After a successful uprising in 1185 A.D., Bulgaria earned back its freedom; this was the beginning of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom (1185 A.D. to 1396 A.D.), which lasted for almost two centuries. The end of the period was marked by controversial disputes among the aristocratic families for political dominance and possession of lands.

The unhealthy climate within the state facilitated the Ottoman invasion. From the south, the Ottomans invaded in 1396 A.D. and conquered the quarrelling aristocrats. According to historical assessments, Bulgaria became a barrier for further Ottoman Muslim invasions into Europe during that period.

Suppressed under the rule of the Sultan, Bulgaria lost its aristocracy, administration, church, and the human rights of its population. It was a period of hardship and largely a matter of mere survival for the population. All these difficulties formed an acute awareness for the preservation of national identity, faith, religious tradition, culture, and history. By developing trade, crafts, an educational system, folklore, and maintaining religious traditions, the Bulgarians managed to survive for five centuries. Along with the cultural, economic, and religious development, the Bulgarian people maintained their revolutionary spirit, which in 1876 materialized into an uprising against the Ottoman oppression. The bloody response by the Sultan drew the attention of the European society and became a major reason for the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-78. The Turkish defeat led to the liberation of Bulgaria and opened a new page in Bulgarian history.

The San Stephano Peace Treaty, signed on March 3, 1878, was the official act of liberation of the Bulgarian people. According to the treaty, all lands which were inhabited by Bulgarians fell within the borders of the independent state of Bulgaria. Yet this solution was unfavorable for Britain, France, and Germany; they did not want a large and powerful state in the Balkan Peninsula. Their solution tore Bulgaria into three parts, which left more than half of the Bulgarian population outside the borders of the state. This controversial decision encouraged various politico-military commitments of the Bulgarian authorities for unification of the state. Although the Bulgarian Armed Forces had not lost a battle on the field, the nation suffered numerous defeats in the diplomatic arena. In 1885, Northern and Southern Bulgaria proclaimed their unification, in spite of the protests of the European powers. The dream of a complete national unification was injected into the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and World War I and II. Sadly, however, very little was achieved for the Bulgarian national cause.

At the conclusion of World War II, Bulgaria fell under the Russian sphere of influence. During the first four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Bulgaria had begun

developing a capitalist-based economy, but the Soviets had other ideas. The communist leadership and the Russian authorities quickly enforced a new economic system based on the centralization, industrialization, and nationalization of economic assets. The Bulgarian population was deprived of its rights and was controlled by the secret services. In the outcome of democratic processes and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria opened a new page of its history. After 1989 the state managed to reorganize its politico-economic system and elected a democratic parliament and established a basis for a market economy. The benefits of the process became evident with a general stabilization of the economy, the establishment of democratic institutions, and the creation of opportunities for the population. In 2004, Bulgaria became a full NATO member. In 2007, the state is expected to be accepted into the European Union (Bulgaria's History, 2006).

## **B. GEOPOLITICAL CLIMATE AND SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. Balkan Security in the Context of the Conflict in Former Yugoslavia**

Bulgarian national policy evolved as a result of a relatively complex and dynamic security environment. The democratic changes in the Balkans still influence regional security. The collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia demonstrates the unpredictability of the socio-political changes in an environment of an immature democracy (e.g., lack of centralized control and revived nationalism). The war in the former Yugoslavia exposed the vulnerability of regional peace and the weaknesses of the European institutions as the guardians of security. This failure imposes changes of the paradigms for regional security, especially for countries located close to less stable areas. Bulgaria is dangerously close to the former Yugoslavia and is indirectly influenced by the negative consequences of its recent crises. For example, ethnic hostilities in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s isolated Bulgaria from Western Europe, halting its economic and political development. The crisis in the Balkans not only delayed politico-economic processes, but established an unstable and potentially dangerous security environment for the neighboring countries (Bulgarian National Security Concept, 1998). In accordance with the Annual National Security Report (ANSR) for 2005, despite that the region is in a phase of stabilization, the security level of the area is still the lowest in

Europe (2006). There are preconditions for ethnic tensions, which combine with the poor economic situation, organized crime, corruption, and ineffective administration, to aggravate the security environment.

The latest challenges for peace in the region are the resolution of Kosovo's status and the separation of Montenegro from Serbia. Moreover, the close proximity of states which participate in the global war on terror, such as Bulgaria and Romania, to areas with dense Muslim populations may inspire radical Islamism and acts of terrorism against both countries. Although international initiatives and economic support for the region mitigate these probabilities, the western Balkans is still an unstable region (ANSR, 2006).

## **2. The Geo-strategic Importance of the Balkans**

The latest developments in the Balkans and the Black Sea region ended the traditional Russian influence over the local states, particularly Bulgaria. Bulgarian and Romanian admission into NATO in 2004 was the formal outcome of the new geo-strategic situation in the Balkans. The new politico-military environment in the region will certainly have considerable consequences for global politics. The Balkans and the Black Sea region have been a stage for geo-political struggles over a long period of time. History is a reminder of intense political and military battles among the Russian-Orthodox world, the Ottoman-Muslim Empire, and the West for control over this strategically important region. Most recently, two major international political trends have predetermined the dynamics in the Balkans. First, the transition of the local states from Russian influence to American guardianship begets antagonism between Germany and France, on one side, and the U.S. on the other. The second deals with energy resources. There is now an established "energy axis" that delivers gas and oil resources from Central Asia and the Caspian Sea to the Balkans and Western Europe. It is a strategic energy root which is an alternative to the Russian pipelines for the European Union. Not only will the energy axis diminish the European dependence on Russian crude resources, but it will also undermine Moscow's economic influence in the European region. Therefore, Western control over the Balkans and Black Sea region will influence the policies of the local states and will affect Russian economic interests in the



region. Once again, it appears that Bulgaria's national security is dependent upon the outcome of a struggle amongst the world's major powers. Ultimately, the stability of Bulgaria is based on two choices: strategic partnership with the USA and NATO membership, and economic relations with Western Europe and accession to the European Union (Bordonaro, 2005).

### **3. The Role of Organized Crime in the Region**

Considering the fact that Bulgaria is a part of the European corridor for strategic transport, communications, and energy supplies, the geo-strategic position of the state considerably affects both national and European security. Being a natural politico-economic nerve center, the Balkan Peninsula attracts the interests of not only the U.S. and the European Union but, regrettably, of worldwide organized crime groups as well. The strategic transport corridors passing through Bulgaria facilitate money laundering, and the trafficking of narcotics, arms, and humans, endangering not only Bulgarian security, but also many European states (NSC, 1998). Criminal activities and corruption at high levels of administration are a root cause for the gray economy in Bulgaria.

Being under permanent pressure, organized crime constantly evolves its methods of operation, changing basic principles and the means of communication and trafficking. Major difficulties for countering the illegal organizations are their sophisticated structures, complex relations, and an uncanny ability to disguise as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or radical groups. Thus, encouraged by huge profits generated by illegal activities, organized crime may use various levers to influence Bulgarian institutions. Mafia groups recognize that a weak state is a fertile ground for their illicit businesses; therefore, they are interested in the destabilization of the state and halting the democratic and economic reforms. In summary, the evolution of organized crime and its symbiosis with radical religious groups, slow transformation of law-enforcement institutions, weak border control, and insufficient capabilities for maintaining order within the state additionally increase the risks for national and regional security (ANSR, 2006).

After Bulgaria becomes a member of the EU, it will become a frontier of the European economic zone. As a result, the criminal organizations in the region may

attempt to halt the admission of Balkan nations, particularly Bulgaria, to the EU. Vice versa, after Bulgaria's accession into the union, by using the weaknesses of the state, many interested illegal players may try to establish companies, run businesses, and expand their criminal activities to other countries of the union (ANSR, 2006).

#### **4. The Threat of Terrorism**

Although the probability for a high intensity conflict in the Balkans is low, the close proximity to unstable regions such as the Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia, and North Africa contain risks of possible escalation into Bulgaria. A major concern for Bulgarian security remains the threat of terrorism and the transportation or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The former threat became much more evident after September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. Terrorism is no longer only a local problem; it is an imminent danger for the world community. Terrorist organizations inspired by the success of Al Qaeda and exasperated by the international political, economic, and military trends are not limited by borders when executing their deadly agendas. Using the latest technological innovations, they are able to spread their ideology worldwide and influence political decisions of the most powerful states. Terrorists have attempted to acquire WMD technology through their own resources and connections (Perl, 2006, p. 4). Using these lethal assets, they easily can blackmail governments and cause numerous deaths and widespread destruction. Terrorist groups are highly adaptable to the countermeasures used against them by decentralizing their structures and adapting their systems of coordination.

In recent years, the nexus between organized crime and terrorist groups has become more evident. As Raphael Perl (2006) observes, one of the latest trends is “an increasing overlap of terrorism activity with organized crime” (p. 2). Their relations are based on the gained mutual benefits through the use of the same networks and the combination of their principal motivating factors: monetary gain and profit and radical Islamic ideology. It is clear that terrorists and criminals are likely to choose smaller, weaker, and politically and economically unstable states for their operational bases. Therefore, states in transformation like Bulgaria and Romania, which already have some access to organizations like NATO and EU, can be used as a platform for attacks against

high profile targets in Europe or North America. On the other hand, keeping in mind that Al Qaeda has declared a global jihad against those states that support U.S. policy, and considering the active Bulgarian participation in the global war on terror, one can deduce that Bulgaria is a potential target. Although the state has not yet been attacked by terrorists, the probability of such an attack is relatively high. Some ten percent of the Bulgarian population is Muslim, which could be influenced by radical Islamic organizations. Furthermore, the pervasive ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia has attracted a considerable number of Muslim fighters (Sageman, 2004). Their presence today creates a danger for the spreading of terrorist networks and fueling militant Islamism across neighboring countries, including Bulgaria.

Being inherently insufficient to sustain their operations, the terrorist organizations rely on unorthodox tactics and techniques. Therefore, they are attracted to inexpensive weapons and low-visibility operations that can create large-scale devastation. The Al Qaeda attacks against the U.S., Spain, and UK reveal the new trends in terrorism. Most experts claim that the next objective for the terrorists could be acquiring WMD, specifically nuclear weapons. According to an article by Jeffrey Kluger that appeared in Time magazine, a Bin Laden agent tried to buy radioactive waste from a nuclear power plant in Bulgaria (2001). Considering the central location of Bulgaria in the strategic crossroads of the Balkans and the availability of atomic installations on its territory, nuclear proliferation and transportation is a substantial concern for Bulgarian security (ANSR, 2006).

## **5. New Strategic Alliances for Bulgaria**

NATO membership and the future accession into the European Union are stabilizing factors for the security of Bulgaria. The participation in international military and European economic organizations is a considerable guarantee for the future of Bulgarian security. According to the Annual National Security Report for 2005, from a politico-military perspective, NATO is considered a basic factor which contributes to the national security of the state. The NATO alliance possesses traditionally well-developed military capabilities, far exceeding the individual military potential of individual European countries. It is the only global military organization capable of protecting its

members should their security be endangered (ANSR, 2006). NATO policy is based on close cooperation not only against conventional but also asymmetric threats. As such, the most important yet demanding challenge for Bulgaria is to prove its commitment to NATO and the EU through the fulfillment of the requirements for membership. Bulgarian society and its politicians must recognize that participating in such unions does not serve only organizational interests, but, first and foremost, the strategic interests of the state. Beneficial relations among the partners in strategic alliances are based on balanced policies and commitments.

#### **6. Peripheral Factors Influencing Bulgarian National Security**

The new realities of dynamic political, economic, and organizational transformations can change the long lasting status-quo in certain regions. Destabilization of politically fragile geographical areas hides unpredictable risks for global peace and security (NSC, 1998). What is more, non-governmental organizations can become influential players that gradually supplant traditional state power-brokers. These organizations could facilitate terrorist and organized crime groups in pursuit of their agendas while exercising pressure on politically unstable and economically weak regions. High-technological dependence of developed countries is another issue of security concern. Over-reliance on insecure technological assets and informational innovations creates a potential danger for the security of the state. Finally, contemporary countries can be negatively affected by indirect factors such as diverse economic changes, natural disasters, and industrial calamities; all these catastrophic events can aggravate Bulgarian national stability and social peace (ANSR, 2006).

#### **C. SUMMARY**

The relatively long history of Bulgaria suggests that the state and its people are capable of surviving the hardships of time. Yet the contemporary geopolitical environment and latest threats pose new challenges for Bulgarian national security. On the one hand, the probability for a conventional conflict in the Balkans is relatively small. However, on the other hand, the threat of terrorism and proliferation of WMD is becoming a major concern for Bulgarian authorities. They must recognize that terrorist organizations and their networks are capable of launching a new kind of warfare against

nation states. The traditional expectations of contemporary countries for conventional conflicts do not coincide with the unconventional methods of the new, shadowy enemy.

As a member of various international military, economic, and political organizations, Bulgaria faces these same threats and must establish an appropriate security strategy and tailor suitable means to attain it. There is an assumption that conventional military forces are not tailored to counter asymmetric threats, because an irregular adversary must be fought by correspondingly unconventional forces and innovative tactics. This is where Special Operations Forces (SOF) come into play. SOF could prove essential in the defense of Bulgarian national security objectives and the fight against contemporary threats.

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### **III. BULGARIAN NATIONAL AND MILITARY STRATEGIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

The National Security Concept of 1998 provides strategic guidance for Bulgarian national security, while the Military Doctrine of the Republic of Bulgaria, written in 1999, regulates the military response to national security risks. There are several sources, such as the Annual National Security Report for 2005 and the Long-term Vision for Development of the Armed Forces of 2005, which provide updated information and new visions on the security and defense of the state. At the moment, the Bulgarian Parliament is in deliberations on a new draft of the National Security Strategy, which will constitute a basis for further development of a new military doctrine.

The geopolitical climate and security environment in Bulgaria predefine the national political and military strategies. Likewise, the assessment of contemporary threats to national security provides major guidance for the foreign policy of the state. According to the evaluation of the internal and external political environments, the strategic priorities for Bulgaria are divided into foreign and domestic initiatives and tasks.

#### **A. REGIONAL POLICY**

##### **1. Maintaining Regional Security and Stability**

Bulgaria's top priority in the area of regional cooperation is "maintaining an active policy for consolidation of trust, stability, security, and implementation of European standards in bilateral relations with the countries within the region through assisting their efforts for admission into the European Union and NATO" (ANSR, 2006). As mentioned in the first chapter, Bulgaria has suffered territorial losses and diplomatic defeats inflicted by its neighbors throughout its history. The Balkan Wars and the First and Second World Wars inflicted considerable damage to the state which led to two national catastrophes and the loss of territory and the population of the country. Bulgaria's adversaries in some of these wars were its neighbors – Turkey, Serbia, Greece, and Romania. From a historical perspective, having learned the lessons of these conflicts, Bulgarian authorities acknowledged the importance of regional stability and cooperation as a major factor for national security.

The substantiation of the importance for regional peace was the prolonged conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The consequences of nearly a decade of fighting affected all neighboring countries -- in particular Bulgaria. Therefore, the stability of the Balkans is more likely to be achieved on the grounds of common standards and rules imposed by global organization. The process of stabilization and the strengthening of bilateral relations can be facilitated by mutual interests, general principles, and goals, which can be achieved through membership in NATO, the EU, and other global organizations. A good example is the Turkey and Greece dynamic.

Turkey and Greece have a historically strained relationship. Yet, in spite of their simmering hostilities, their membership in NATO has undoubtedly deterred conflict between the two. Therefore, it would be correct to assume that memberships in organizations like NATO, the EU and perhaps surprisingly the Warsaw Pact lends itself to regional peace. In fact, after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, despite gaining their sovereignty, the Eastern European countries came away with a degraded national security. They were no longer a part of global military or economic organizations.

With a few exceptions, the former socialist states are small. It is clear that small countries are not always able to maintain reliable national security on their own. Therefore, they will always be dependent on international military organizations and economic unions. As Vayrynen (1997) observes: “. . . the paradox of small powers is that they have to lose a part of their sovereignty by joining economic and security integration to become fully fledged members of the international community in order to reclaim their sovereignty” (p. 70). Evidently, small states do not have much of a choice; the price of their security is formed by participation in global organizations and a strict adherence to the standards of membership. Considering that all the Balkan states except Turkey are small, they are likely to be willing to enhance their security by joining regional and global unions and organizations. Indeed, the pace of admission of Balkan states into NATO and the EU is considerable; Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania are already NATO members. Greece is a member of the EU, while Bulgaria and Romania are expected to join at the beginning of 2007. At the same time, the rest of the Balkan states



are at different levels of negotiations with NATO and the EU. Keeping in mind that the underlying policies of these organizations point at peaceful relations, multilateral security, and economic prosperity, the existing members are highly interested in accession of countries from potentially unstable regions, like the Balkans. Hence, as a present member, Bulgaria has recognized the importance of providing assistance to non-member states in the Balkans for their timely admission and further integration into global organizations.

## **2. The War on Terrorism**

Another important priority for Bulgaria is the war on terrorism. The Bulgarian leadership actively participates in the establishment of the UN Counterterrorism Strategy through actively supporting the Security Council and the UN in the global war on terror. Bulgaria has signed all thirteen UN conventions on counterterrorism and continues working on a national legal framework in response to terrorism. The Bulgarian government participates in more than forty bilateral and regional agreements, which include the exchange of operational information, coordinated activities, and joint operations. Bulgarian security services work out and update complex national plans for antiterrorism and counterterrorism (ANSR, 2006). Apparently, the state plays an active role in all global and European initiatives, strengthening the legal basis related to the war on terror worldwide.

According to the ANSR (2006), the other priorities for the Bulgarian foreign policy related to national security are as follows:

- Exercising influence over the framework of the regional cooperation in accordance with Bulgarian national interests.
- Broadening the span of particular regional joint initiatives for achieving long-lasting and mutually beneficial ends for Bulgaria and its foreign partners.
- Initiation of activities for the accomplishment of transport, energy, and telecommunication projects related to politico-economic interests of Bulgaria.
- Development of economic, social, and cultural cooperation with other countries.

Although the Bulgarian Concept for National Security states that “a national priority for Bulgaria is membership in NATO and the EU which corresponds to the long-term interests of the country” (1998), the Bulgarian leadership should not blindly support the decisions of these organizations. Despite the imposed European standards of foreign policy, Bulgaria should sustain its strategic interests. As Vayrynen (1997) asserts, “Small states have firmly established themselves as independent actors in European regional organizations, but their influence depends on their ability to shape political agendas, propose institutional innovations, and forge coalitions” (p. 70). Therefore, Bulgarian policy can contribute to stability in the region by intensifying mutually beneficial political activities and economic projects through utilization of its membership in global organizations. Deep political, economic, and social relations contribute to long-lasting security and peace among regional partners.

### **3. The U.S. as a Strategic Partner for Bulgaria**

In addition to the membership in NATO and the EU, the Bulgarian leadership has chosen the U.S. as a strategic partner, complementing the factors that support Bulgarian national security. The reason for this choice is deeply embedded in the historic background of international diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and other European state powers. Bordonaro provides a punctual observation:

Historically, the main security concern for all Eastern, Central-Eastern and South-Eastern European countries has been not to fall prey to German or Russian hegemony. An offshore great power (Great Britain or the U.S.) is therefore preferable to a continental one. Politically, the U.S. simply has momentum and capabilities far superior to French and German ones in the last 15 years, explaining its attractiveness to these smaller European states (2005).

The Bulgarian authorities envision the U.S. as a powerful and reliable partner with global influence and economic potential. However, the benefits of partnership are not only Bulgaria's, as the U.S. recognizes the strategic location of Bulgaria and its proximity to the Middle East. Not surprisingly, both countries signed an agreement for military cooperation, which includes the establishment of temporary U.S. military bases within Bulgaria. As stated earlier, Bulgaria is an active partner in the global war on terror, providing forces to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, the U.S. has

assisted Bulgaria in reforming its military by advising military leadership and financing various programs for modernization of the Bulgarian Armed Forces (ANSR, 2005). Clearly, the relations between both countries are established on mutually beneficial interests.

## **B. INTERNAL SECURITY**

Internal security of the Republic of Bulgaria is a necessary complement to its overall national security strategy. Both foreign and domestic priorities of the national security are mutually dependent. According to ANSR, the maintenance of interior security of the state will be based on the accomplishment of the following activities:

- Defining and endorsement of strategic objectives for Bulgarian security policy as a basic factor for protecting national interests.
- Cooperation and coordination among security services of the Republic of Bulgaria and the countries members of NATO, the EU, and neighboring states.
- Establishment of political stability and democratic institutions, obeying the law, effective protection of human rights and efficient market economy.
- Economic prosperity, effective social policy, improvement of national education system, and scientific research in the area of security.
- Achieving and maintaining national consensus on essential issues that contribute to national security and protect interests of the state (ANSR, 2006).

One of the most important priorities is the designation of strategic objectives in support of internal security. Without clearly defining the methods of accomplishing internal security, attaining internal stability and prosperity for the country will be far less likely. This prerequisite is of paramount significance for a small state like Bulgaria. For that reason, Bulgarian authorities and the Parliament should adopt an updated National Security Strategy (NSS) as soon as possible. The NSS is a foundation document that provides guidance for all national institutions related to national security. An identification and endorsement of national security policy will facilitate future cooperation and coordination with security services of NATO, the EU, and neighboring states, which is a second priority for internal national security of Bulgaria. Recalling that the state is a newly established democratic entity with a developing market economy, it

becomes increasingly vulnerable to contemporary security risks. Moreover, the geo-strategic location of Bulgaria in the Balkans is another complicating factor for national security. Due to its limited resources, the state is in no position unilaterally to ensure its safety. Thus, successfully countering security threats is impossible without close cooperation with friendly countries. Keeping in mind that contemporary states anticipate similar security challenges, the inadequate national security of Bulgaria could affect the safety of its partners worldwide. Therefore, international collaboration is a necessary prerequisite and a mutually beneficial process for both Bulgarian national and international security.

The next level of domestic security is the establishment and further maintenance of a stable institutional architecture of the country, viable democratic mechanisms, a properly working judicial system, and an efficient market economy; each of these are necessary prerequisites for achieving the goals of Bulgarian national security. Alternatively, organized crime and corruption constitute one of the gravest internal problems for the state. Coupled with the underdeveloped judiciary system, Bulgaria is criticized by the European Union for these predicaments because they could affect the security of other European states. As mentioned earlier, the unstable and insecure national environment could attract international terrorist organizations and radical Islamic groups. Facilitated by organized crime, they could use Bulgaria as an entry point to Western Europe and, possibly, to the U.S. (ANSR, 2006). Of particular concern, the country has a nuclear power-plant, which could be targeted or used as a source for acquisition of nuclear material by terrorists.

The welfare of the Bulgarian society is another basic component of internal security; it is closely related to the aforementioned priorities of the security strategy. The well-being of Bulgarians could be considered as a natural barrier for organized crime, corruption, and, indirectly, terrorism. Furthermore, social prosperity can be achieved through appropriate economic and social policy providing a high level of employment, beneficial conditions for retirement, obeying human rights, and investing in education and culture. A successful accomplishment of all these priorities could establish a stable domestic security environment with a prosperous society united on essential issues that

contribute to strategic interests of the Republic of Bulgaria while facilitating the military and civilian law-enforcement agencies protecting Bulgarian national and global security.

### **C. BULGARIAN MILITARY STRATEGY**

Bulgarian defense policy is a vital component of the foreign and domestic security policy of the state. The ANSR states that the major objective of the Military Strategy is the establishment and maintenance of a favorable security environment for the attainment of Bulgarian national interests. Therefore, defense policy is predefined by national interests and is an element of the overall security policy of the state. The defense policy of the state is exercised within the context of NATO's collective defense and in accordance with the requirements of Bulgaria's pending membership in the EU. The defense of the country has shifted from the neutralization of a specific adversary to the development of capabilities designed to respond to specific risks and threats. This change sought to better address Bulgaria's modern security threats.

The Bulgarian Armed Forces have commenced a process of dynamic transformation. A major goal for the defense of the state is safeguarding security and preserving its territorial integrity in the context of NATO collective defenses through a complete mobilization and involvement of national capabilities and resources. The Ministry of Defense is determined to develop a modern and effective defense system and armed forces with capabilities and organizational designs adequate to attend to national interests, the challenges of the security environment, and the regulations of NATO.

Improving the Bulgarian Armed Forces and their capabilities for the requirements of national security and NATO regulations is a major objective of the military transformation. The main principles of this process are outlined in the 2004 Strategic Review of Defense and are defined for implementation in the Long-Term Vision for the Development of the Armed Forces (LTVDAF); both documents are cited in the ANSR. According to the LTVDAF, the Bulgarian Armed Forces must be transformed into combat-efficient, multi-purpose, relatively self-sufficient, properly equipped, and highly mobile military units with joint capabilities for deployment on the territory of the state or

abroad. Evidently, the transformation of the armed forces is carried out for the successful accomplishment of missions and tasks generated by local and global security environments (ANSR, 2006).

According to the ANSR (2006) the most important military efforts are directed at:

- Transformation of armed forces for attainment of the required operational capabilities.
- Transformation of procedures and practices for establishment and implementation of security and defense policy.
- An effective membership in NATO.
- Integration into the system of European policy on security and defense.

The Bulgarian military leadership continues its active participation in the process for the development of NATO's defense policy and implementation of the allied resolutions. As a NATO partner, Bulgaria participates in the forces planning process of the alliance through harmonizing national procedures and mechanisms. According to the agreements with NATO, the Bulgarian authorities continue to execute the Forces' Goals Plan (FGP) approved in 2004, which includes 70 goals. In accordance with the plan, Bulgaria has committed 21 combat and combat service support units to NATO's collective defense. These 21 units must be operational not later than 2010 (ANSR, 2006). One of these forces' goals refers to Bulgarian SOF; it is the EG 3520 – Special Operations Task Force for the NATO Response Force (68<sup>th</sup> SFBDE, 2006). The objective of the FGP is that Bulgarian military units achieve full operational capability according to NATO standards. However, NATO is not the only organization in which Bulgaria participates; the state also continues its commitments to the Paris Initiative for providing defensive capabilities. The Bulgarian contribution to the initiative is comprised of eleven commitments in four areas: defense against nuclear, chemical, and biological threats; acquisition of informational superiority, combat effectiveness, and operational interoperability; development of capabilities for rapid deployment, and combat service support for the armed forces (ANSR, 2006).

The integration in the system of the European policy on security and defense is another leading priority for the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Therefore, Bulgarian military units continue their active role in Operation Althea under the EU command in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, Bulgaria has declared its willingness to participate in the multinational tactical combat group of the EU. It might be concluded that Bulgaria considers the participation of its armed forces in missions and operations abroad as activities that generate security for the state. Through actively supporting international initiatives directed to enhancing global security, a country may engage the anticipated threats far away from its borders. Likewise, it is through such commitments the Bulgarian leadership fulfills its responsibilities to the EU and NATO, which contributes to global security. Presently, Bulgaria has forces deployed in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and participates with military observers under UN command in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Liberia (ANSR, 2006).

#### **D. SUMMARY**

Bulgarian national security strategy is a complex set of international and domestic policies that are pointed at maintaining national interests and safeguarding the security of the state. For the implementation of the national security strategy, Bulgarian authorities rely on a smooth interrelation between political, military, economic, and social agencies, yet the military potential of a state provides a basic foundation for its secure existence and functioning. As a result, national security strategy and national military strategy are closely related. Considering the security environment and possible threats for Bulgaria, its efforts are directed at strengthening international political and economic cooperation in the Balkan region, developing stable democratic institutions and advanced security services in the country, and transforming the Bulgarian Armed Forces into a highly capable military asset for national and collective security within NATO. However, the necessary military transformation will be expensive.

Military transformation is a protracted, complex, and costly process that consists of organizational, operational, and technological changes. Stated earlier, the objective of the transformation is to establish combat-efficient, multi-purpose, relatively self-sufficient, properly equipped, and highly mobile military units with joint capabilities for deployment on the territory of the state or abroad in response to contemporary threats against Bulgaria or its NATO allies. All these specifications differ significantly from the

Cold War mindset which dictated the possession of large conventional forces designed to confront a similarly organized enemy on an open battlefield. However, times have changed. Today, the best response to Bulgaria's new and emerging threats are unconventional forces, defined by Joint Publication 3-05 (2003) as "a small size, unique capabilities, self-sufficiency (for short periods of time) ... providing appropriate military responses" (p. xx). The nature of the present Bulgarian security environment and the national and military strategies suggest that Bulgarian SOF (BSOF) could be the most appropriate military asset for countering the asymmetric threats for Bulgarian national security. Whether or not BSOF is widely regarded as a valuable military tool, an analysis of its role in the national and military strategies of the Republic of Bulgaria is required.



#### **IV. THE ROLE OF BULGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN NATIONAL SECURITY AND MILITARY STRATEGIES**

##### **A. A HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF BULGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES**

The first Bulgarian military unit with special capabilities was established in the spring of 1942. It was a 400-man airborne detachment that underwent training in Germany. In addition to providing tactical training, Germany also armed and equipped the unit. Ironically, its first deployment was against German forces retreating from Greece in 1945. Known as the battle of Stracin-Strajin, the unit demonstrated exceptional heroism and completed their assigned task by capturing important positions in the German rear area of operations. This was done with a cost of 59 dead and 151 wounded Bulgarian soldiers. At the end of the war, this unit went through various reorganizations and transformations. In 1964, two airborne reconnaissance regiments were established: one in the city of Plovdiv and another in Mosachevo (close to the capital of Sofia). In 1975, the two units merged and formed the 68<sup>th</sup> Airborne Reconnaissance Regiment located in Plovdiv. In 1993, the regiment was reorganized into a brigade and was subordinated to the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff. This higher position recognized its strategic importance to the Bulgarian politico-military leadership.

The brigade was planned and employed at a joint level with minimal interference from, or dependence on, the other services of the Bulgarian Armed Forces. More so than conventional units, the brigade was well-equipped with contemporary (for that time) special weapons, communication assets, and special equipment. Meanwhile, three additional airborne reconnaissance battalions were formed and placed under the command of the Army. These three battalions later merged as the 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Reconnaissance Regiment (ARR). Both the 68<sup>th</sup> Airborne Reconnaissance Brigade (ARB) and the 1<sup>st</sup> ARR developed and maintained Spetsnaz, or Special Assignment,

(Spetnaz is the Russian version of U.S. Army Special Forces) capabilities designed to carry out unique missions to include special reconnaissance, direct action, subversion, and unconventional warfare.

In 2001, the 68<sup>th</sup> ARB was renamed the 68<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Brigade (SFB). Together with the 1<sup>st</sup> ARR and a recently established psychological operations (PSYOP) battalion, they were placed under the newly founded Special Operations Forces Command (SOFCOM). This command was subordinated to the Army HQ. In doing so, BSOF lost its strategic relevance. It became part of the planning, decision-making, and procurement system of the Army. From that moment, BSOF was obstructed, dependent upon, and downgraded by conventional commanders of the armed services.

The first combat assignment for Army SOFCOM units was the participation in the post-war recovery of Iraq in 2003. According to the decision of the national politico-military leadership, Bulgarian military were not deployed as organic units, but as ad-hoc components made up of volunteers. The likely reason for that decision was the unwillingness of Bulgarian authorities to order the deployment of military units that were not fully manned with volunteers, and because of transformation, the Bulgarian Armed Forces likely did not have capable organic units at the battalion level for such a deployment. At that time, military laws did not envision a mandatory deployment of Bulgarian military units abroad. Although the ad-hoc organization reduced the operational capabilities of the deployed units, BSOF soldiers demonstrated a high level of professionalism, combat efficiency, and bravery. Four BSOF operators lost their lives and many were wounded in various operations in Iraq (68<sup>th</sup> SFBDE, 2006). If BSOF had been deployed as organic teams organized into a task force with a SOF HQ element, these casualties might have not occurred and the security of the Bulgarian battalion in Iraq might have better maintained. A successful accomplishment of a military mission abroad is more likely to enhance Bulgarian national security.

Unfortunately, as part of the latest reorganization according to the LTVDAF, there is a diminution of BSOF. In an interview dated June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the Chief of the General Staff General Stoykov stated that: “According to the plans for transformation, the Bulgarian Special Operations Forces Command has been cut down” (2006, Penkova).

Accordingly, the 1<sup>st</sup> ARR is expected to be reduced to a battalion and will be subordinated to the 68<sup>th</sup> SF Brigade. The PSYOP battalion will be reduced to a company and will be shifted away from the BSOF community. Such insular thinking could prove costly. Considering the growing emergence of asymmetric security risks worldwide and assuming that Special Forces possess appropriate military capabilities to counter such threats, the downsizing of BSOF will likely negatively affect Bulgarian national security.

## **B. THE ROLE OF BSOF IN THE MILITARY STRATEGY.**

The role of BSOF in the national and military security strategies is portrayed indirectly in official open source documents such as concepts and doctrines. There are very few unclassified texts on national or military strategies that directly refer to Special Forces and their potential employment. In several official documents, the use of BSOF is implied in general terms. In only a handful of open sources do senior Bulgarian officials and high-ranking military officers mention BSOF in the context of national security. This is similar to the U.S. SOF. Senior leaders in the U.S. largely ignored U.S. SOF prior to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. According to the testimony of Congressman Curt Weldon, referring to the causes of al-Qaeda's attacks, U.S. SOF had identified the most important cells of al-Qaeda and proposed a plan to eliminate them. Unfortunately, the U.S. leadership rejected the suggested operation. Indirectly, their inaction probably facilitated the epic attacks on 9/11 (Verton, 2003). The general lack of information on BSOF in official documents is probably predetermined by the secrecy and sensitivity of employment of Special Forces in the interest of Bulgarian national security. Another explanation for the scarce analyses on the issue could be the misunderstanding and underestimation by senior political and military leaders of the potential of special operations.

### **1. Employment of BSOF in Counterterrorist (CT) Operations**

The Military Doctrine (MD) of the Republic of Bulgaria provides general direction for employment of the Bulgarian Armed Forces. Although somewhat dated (written in 1999 and amended in 2002), the MD is the current "system of strategic views, principles and approaches to ensure Bulgarian national security in political and military

terms” (MD, 2002). Revealing various regulations for the employment of the armed forces, the doctrine also indirectly implies the employment of BSOF. According to the Bulgarian MD:

49. During peace time and in cases of crisis of non-military character, armed forces:

- a. Participate in the preventive and direct protection of the population in cases of threats, accidents and catastrophes.
- b. Assist, in compliance with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Bulgaria, the security services in their efforts against the proliferation of WMD, illegal trafficking of arms, international terrorism, etc.
- c. Participate in the protection of strategic sites and in operations to prevent international organized crime or terrorist activities, after military help is required by the competent organs and in a way defined by the legislation (2002).

As discussed later in the thesis, Special Forces might be considered as a capable military asset to deal with unconventional threats like terrorism, the proliferation of WMD, and illegal arms trafficking. Moreover, CEDESOF, written in 2000, assigns BSOF such tasks as supporting activities in the counter-proliferation of WMD, countering drug and arms trafficking, and counterterrorism. BSOF supports operations conducted by law-enforcement agencies by providing sensitive intelligence and security of strategic sites, convoying the transportation of dangerous substances, and executing direct action missions in inaccessible or politically denied areas (2002, p. 12). Although BSOF is a subordinate to the Bulgarian Army, the Bulgarian MD and CEDESOF envision BSOF as a primary military asset for countering asymmetric threats in the interest of protecting national security, while the Bulgarian Armed Forces are organized, trained, equipped, and employed for conducting conventional operations.

A report titled “The Role of the Bulgarian Armed Forces Countering Terrorist Threats,” written by the Chief of Operations the General Staff Brigadier General Pehlivanov (2006), confirms the former assumption stating that:

The active participation of armed forces on the territory of the state encompasses: . . . in case of emergency, an assistance to the units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in their counterterrorist activities; the support will be basically provided by BSOF.

The report further directs:

[The] Bulgarian Special Forces to develop and exercise their counterterrorism capabilities according to planned programs and courses. An additional priority for the development of a military counterterrorist capability is the qualitative improvement of training, armament, and equipment for BSOF and significantly expanding its mobility.

This statement supports the notion of the growing relevance of BSOF in the war on terror (WOT). Taillon (2001) found that “Terrorism is not a specific phenomenon: it is part of continuum from low-intensity conflict, subversion, and guerrilla warfare tactics, to acts of spectacular violence designed to make a political, rather than military, point” (p. xi). Considering that SOF are tailored and trained to operate against irregular threats, and assuming that successful counterterrorism operations require proportionate and analogous responses, one may conclude that special forces are a suitable military counterterrorist asset. Keeping in mind that terrorists tend to operate unconventionally and attack the least expected and most sensitive targets, crises related to terrorism demand a proactive, swift, and decisive response.

It may be argued that SOF should not be employed for resolving terrorist crises, and that national law-enforcement agencies should be unilaterally responsible for dealing with such threats. In fact, the involvement of military units, particularly SOF, in CT operations should be approved by national politico-military authorities. But crises related to terrorism or the proliferation of WMD usually create a complex and dynamic environment. Hence, the employment of civilian counterterrorist units may not be the most plausible solution. Typically, law-enforcement agencies do not possess assets for a swift and long-range projection of force, nor are their units equipped and trained to operate in inaccessible or denied areas. Taillon (2001) observes that:

The importance of intelligence gathering and dissemination, the creation and organization and training of counterterrorist forces, the requirement of forward-basing of these forces during international accidents, and the

nature of the precrisis cooperation between the countries concerned are stark necessities if a counter-terrorist action is to be successful on the contemporary scene (p. xi).

Counter-terror efforts should be undertaken as multilateral activities, in which SOF is given either a primary or supporting role. Recalling the statements in the MD and CEDESOF, the Bulgarian military leadership relies on the use of BSOF to counter asymmetric threats in support of national security. That said, these forces must be properly organized, trained and equipped in order to be a useful asset for countering such threats. In conclusion, Taillon (2001) maintains that “... [E]lite forces, organized, armed, trained, and structured for the counter-terrorist role, can be an effective arm of governments in dealing with terrorism” (p. xi).

## **2. Employment of BSOF in Peace Support Operations (PSO)**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Bulgaria participates in various PSO worldwide, in accordance with its policy of stabilizing local crises. The involvement of the Bulgarian Armed Forces in such operations is determined by the following articles in the MD (2002):

51. In case of an international military political crisis, the Bulgarian Armed Forces participate in Peace Support Operations and operations other than war in compliance with the mandate given to the country.

52. In operations other than war, the allocated contingents are assigned to and participate in missions in compliance with the relevant agreements.

53. In operations other than war, the contingents of the Armed Forces implement special forms and use specific means of action in compliance with the approved terms of use of the armed forces.

Additionally, the Bulgarian Military Strategy (2002) states:

The formations from the Bulgarian Armed Forces which take part in peace support operations outside the territory of the country, can conduct land, air, navy or special operations under the terms of peace support operations.

The employment of BSOF in PSO is clearly outlined in the Bulgarian Military Strategy. The components that will participate in PSO are previously defined by multilateral agreements based on the operation's mandate. On the one hand, international

organizations establish a framework for participation. On the other hand, the participating nations are able to mold their contingents according to the anticipated threats, but still in compliance with the approved terms. Thus, if Bulgarian politico-military authorities decide to deploy BSOF, it can be used independently or as a supporting sub-unit of a Bulgarian PSO force. In fact, the first deployment of Bulgarian Special Forces was in the PSO for the stabilization and post-war recovery of Iraq (68<sup>th</sup> SFBDE, 2006). Although the employment of BSOF was carried out in an ad-hoc manner -- three SOF teams were organized into a platoon and attached to a light infantry company -- and not in typical accord with SOF Special Operating Procedures (SOP), the success of the BSOF involvement in this PSO was widely acknowledged. In a press conference on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004 the former Chief of the General Staff, General Nikola Kolev, placed special emphasis on a special operation in which BSOF teams (developed prior to the deployment) successfully defeated Iraqi insurgents while defending the central administrative buildings of Karbala (We Defended Our Positions in Karbala, 2004). In addition to the latter example, the following table illustrates that almost the whole spectrum of special operations may potentially be conducted during a PSO campaign. PSO operations are performed during the post-conflict period.

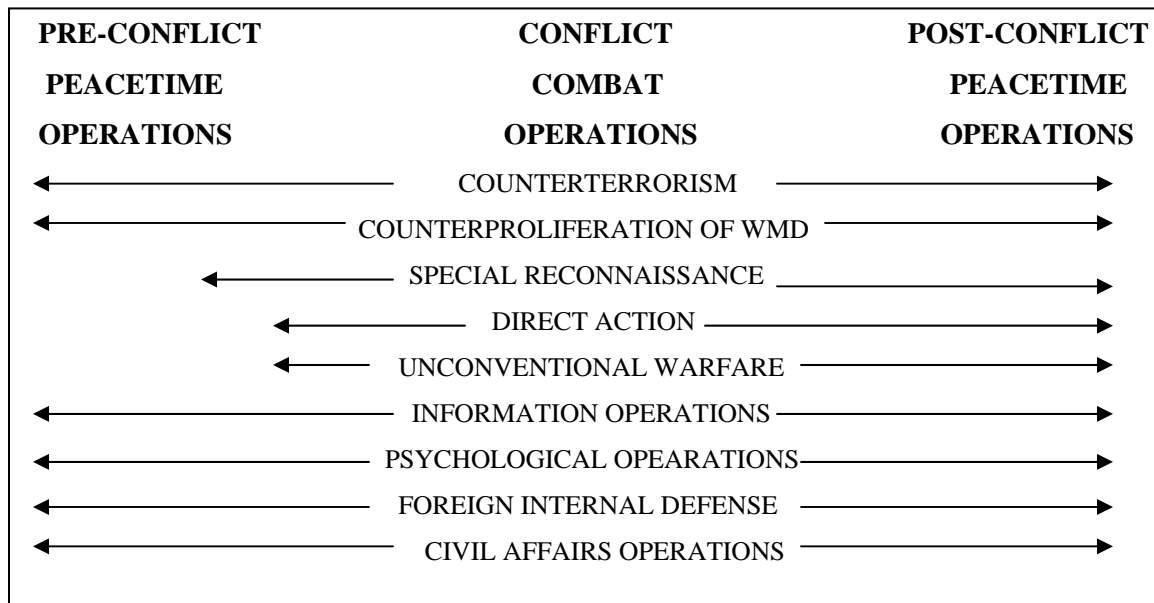


Figure 1. SOF Core Tasks Across the Spectrum of Conflict (USSOCOM, 2004)

The Bulgarian CEDESOF includes almost all tasks that are shown in the table. Although Bulgarian Military Strategy (2002) includes military assistance as one of the missions for the armed forces, according to the CEDESOF, foreign internal defense (FID) and unconventional warfare (UW) are not included as tasks for BSOF. Yet under specific conditions, they might contribute to the success of a PSO. Considering the combat experience from Iraq and the SO tasks outlined in CEDESOF, the operations that BSOF is most capable of executing in the context of a PSO are counterterrorism (CT), special reconnaissance (SR), direct action (DA), and limited PSYOP. Bulgarian Special Forces could assist in close cooperation with law-enforcement agencies counter-proliferation operations. BSOF possesses a set of special capabilities that elevate its relevance in PSO. To maximize the effectiveness of BSOF, the forces should be used appropriately – often this means employment in accordance with special operations SOPs or as an independent task force comprised of HQ element and operational detachments. Thus, Bulgarian MS and MD envision BSOF not only as a significant force multiplier for Bulgarian peacekeeping contingents but also as an independent task force participating in PSOs worldwide.

### **3. Employment of BSOF in Humanitarian Crisis Operations**

Apart from a war-fighting employment, Bulgarian Special Forces can provide assistance during humanitarian operations. Article 50 of the MD states:

50. In peace time and in case of an international humanitarian crisis, the Bulgarian Armed Forces participate with contingents in humanitarian and rescue operations. The units will be deployed to the crisis area and will carry out search-and-rescue, evacuation, restoration operations and other supporting activities (2002).

The doctrine indirectly implies that as a part of the armed forces, BSOF might participate in search and rescue (SAR) and evacuation and humanitarian operations in support of the civilian population. Under certain circumstances the outcome from the provision of humanitarian assistance can be much more valuable than the result of conducting kinetic military operations. BSOF once again is regarded by Bulgarian MD and, indirectly, by the military leadership, as a valuable asset for Bulgarian or foreign authorities in humanitarian operations.



#### **4. Employment of BSOF in Conventional Operations**

During a conventional conflict, BSOF will be tasked according to the overall planning for offensive or defensive campaigns in the interest of protecting Bulgarian national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Keeping in mind that Bulgarian Special Forces are subordinated to Army HQ, and considering the organizational reductions they have recently undertaken, it appears that BSOF will be regarded predominantly as a supporting element for conventional forces during high intensity conflicts. It is a common perception, particularly amongst Army commanders, that SOF should have a supporting role in a conventional campaign. BSOF is subordinated to the Army; therefore, it may be assumed that it could be given the task of executing mainly SR and DA. Alternatively, if it is employed at a joint level under the direct C2 of the General Staff, for example, BSOF may deter the enemy by conducting proactive direct or indirect operations against strategic, time-sensitive, and high or low-profile targets prior to the commencement of the conflict. In the context of a conventional crisis directly threatening the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the state, the Bulgarian MS states:

The Bulgarian Armed Forces support the political and diplomatic efforts for regulation of the crisis directly threatening national security; they maintain and use forces and assets for early warning and immediate reaction. Elements of the Armed Forces are kept in readiness for adequate reaction and interaction with other authorities and organizations (2002).

Furthermore, the Bulgarian CEDESOF defines special operations (SO) as planned and coordinated military activities conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped forces for achieving military, political or informational ends in hostile or politically sensitive environments (2000, p. 5). One may conclude that SO offer a source of strategic alternative and that BSOF is a military asset which can provide proactive and deterrent activities in support of Bulgarian national security against conventional threats. Referring to political signaling, Cohen (1978) suggests that:

Elite units offer two basic advantages to the would-be signaler. First, they may be inherently valuable as a signaler of serious commitment because of their reputation... Secondly, elite units tend to offer governments better chances for success than the regular units in performing a sensitive signaling operation. Extreme reliability is obviously necessary for an action whose aims are symbolic than purely military (p. 49-50).

The flexibility, adaptability, and improvisation of BSOF could proactively provide strategic results, even during conventional combat operations (CEDESOF, 2000). One might conclude that Bulgarian Military Strategy and the politico-military leadership rely on the advantages offered by BSOF even during a conventional crisis.

### **C. THE ROLE OF BSOF IN BULGARIAN NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY**

Recalling the strategic priorities of the state outlined in the previous chapter, the role of BSOF in Bulgarian national security strategy can be indirectly assumed. In any instance where national security strategy refers to solutions through or with the support of military means, Bulgarian Special Forces may potentially be used. Bulgarian Military Strategy and Doctrine are based on the Bulgarian National Security Concept; therefore, Bulgarian military policy is predicated on the requirements of national security and strategic interests. Consequently, all the security issues identified in the Bulgarian security strategy that require military responses are comprehensively addressed in the Bulgarian Military Strategy.

The ANSR states:

The Republic of Bulgaria will protect its national interests and will guarantee the stability of the state against external threats through active foreign policy and security consistent strategy. The country will contribute to the efforts of the international community in strengthening peace and stability worldwide (2006).

The first part of the statement includes, aside from political activities, a military response against conventional threats posed by an external enemy, which is a basic responsibility for the Bulgarian Armed Forces. Also, as previously mentioned, BSOF will be involved in the overall planning process for the defense of the state. The second part of the citation could incorporate the employment of Bulgarian military units, potentially including Special Forces, in PSOs mandated by international organizations. Furthermore, considering that asymmetric threats are the greatest risks to national security, ANSR outlines future priorities: “The war against terrorism is long lasting and requires decisive implementation of military, law-enforcement, political, financial, and informational countermeasures and resources on the basis of a special counterterrorist system” (2006).

This document assigns the military, and in large point BSOF, a fundamental role in the war on terror, ahead of the other national security agencies. By contrast, General Pehlivanov clearly stated that BSOF can be used only as a final resort and in support to law-enforcement agencies during CT operations. If this “discord” between the political and military views for employment of BSOF in CT operations is unintentional, then the former appears to be a new approach in which the armed forces, particularly BSOF, is regarded as a primary asset for CT responses. This change in the Bulgarian CT policy may be influenced by the U.S. example. The 2006 U.S. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT) states: “Not only do we employ military power, we use diplomatic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement activities to protect the Homeland and extend our defenses, disrupt terrorist operations, and deprive our enemies of what they need to operate and survive” (2006, p. 1). Evidently, the military is a priority for the U.S. administration fighting the GWT. Furthermore, the strategy envisions the efforts of the Department of Defense to meet the challenges of terrorism by “...significantly expanding SOF, increasing the capabilities of its general purpose forces to conduct irregular warfare operations, and initiating the largest rearrangement of its global force posture since the end of World War II” (NSCT, 2006, p. 20). Providing further support to this concept, the U.S. National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism (NMSP for WOT) Annex C, Operations “...establishes Commander of United States Special Operations Forces Command as the supported command for the GWT” (2006, p. 28). Evidently, the U.S. politico-military leadership envisions the military, particularly U.S. SOF, as the primary CT asset for waging the GWT. Considering the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Bulgaria, one might suggest that Bulgarian authorities would be willing to incorporate the U.S. experience and assign the Bulgarian Armed Forces, primarily BSOF, as the primary asset in the war on terror. As the U.S. continuously refines its strategy and doctrine for the WT, its CT policies, efforts, and experience should be favorably regarded by the Bulgarian political and military leadership.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

Both Bulgarian national and military strategies indirectly envision BSOF as a significant military asset in support of national security and strategic interests. According to the Bulgarian Military Doctrine, Military Strategy, the ANSR, and the professional

opinion of much of the military leadership, Bulgarian Special Forces can be utilized as a supporting or supported element in CT operations domestically or abroad. In the event of a conventional conflict, BSOF can be employed as a force multiplier or as a rapid-reaction asset that conducts proactive indirect or direct operations in the interest of Bulgarian national security. Furthermore, CEDESOF states that if a need arises for the deployment of international PSO, BSOF can be included in the national contingent or deployed independently with a specific assignment. Finally, in the event of humanitarian crises or catastrophic natural disasters, BSOF can provide assistance by indirectly supporting Bulgarian national interests.

All the aforementioned utilities of BSOF emphasize its potentially significant role as a guardian of Bulgarian national security and strategic interests. Military and national strategies, and indirectly the Bulgarian politico-military leadership rely on the strategic advantages offered by BSOF. One may argue that BSOF is only indirectly referred to in both national and military strategies; the reason for that is either the insufficient open source information regarding BSOF's employment or the politico-military sensitivity of the utilization of special forces as a guardian of Bulgarian national security and interests. Yet the analysis conducted in this chapter must be expanded beyond the role of BSOF in national and military strategies. After becoming a NATO member in 2004, the political leadership of Bulgaria declared that this military alliance is a major component of Bulgarian national security (ANSR, 2006). Therefore, the Bulgarian Armed Forces, including BSOF, should meet not only the requirements of Bulgarian national and military strategies, but also the responsibilities and challenges posed by membership in NATO.

## **V. BSOF AND CURRENT NATO STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS**

Vayryanen opines that small states are more exposed to hostilities and are less likely to survive the wars waged by large states. Therefore, they tend to participate in international military or political organizations, using the membership to create and enforce rules and regulations in their favor. The author concludes that “usually, international institutions are the best friends of small states” (1997, p. 42). The history of Bulgaria supports Vayryanen’s statement; in 1913, during the Balkan Wars, Bulgaria was attacked by all its neighbors: Turkey, Greece, Serbia, and Romania. Being a neutral state and unprotected by participation in an international alliance, it suffered huge territorial losses (Bulgaria’s History, 2006). This historic lesson has influenced Bulgarian governments, both past and present, to participate in various international political and military organizations. During WWI, WWII, and the Cold War, Bulgaria participated in such alliances.

For nearly fifteen years during the post-Cold War period, Bulgaria did not take part in a global military organization, but in 2004, it joined NATO. According to numerous official Bulgarian sources, NATO is the most important international military organization for Bulgarian national security. Moreover, the ANSR states that “In 2005, national defense was based on the effective employment of the state defense potential, which included the armed forces and non-military components, through integrated defense planning under NATO regulations” (2006). Considering the significance of NATO in Bulgarian plans for defense and national security, the integration of the Bulgarian Armed Forces into the military structure of the Alliance is obligatory. As part of the national military, BSOF should address and conform to NATO Special Operations requirements.

## **A. NATO**

### **1. New challenges for NATO**

NATO was founded on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1949 as a military alliance to protect Western European countries and North America against aggression from the USSR. The most important agreement is defined by Article 5 which states:

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area (NATO, 1949).

However, the changing nature of the security environment following the end of the Cold War requires the development of a new grand strategy for NATO. This strategy should be based on a specific force structure and corresponding operational capabilities. Binnendijk, Gompert, and Kugler assert that NATO should develop

...a new defense framework for its combat forces and other defense capabilities... The framework covers the full spectrum of dangers that Americans and Europeans agree exist and capabilities needed by the Alliance to meet these dangers. The framework is capabilities-based, not threat-based, meaning that it is predicted on what NATO members think their alliance should be able to do, not on predictions of who their enemies might be (2005).

The authors suggest that U.S. and European forces must be prepared for major combat operations that could cover a wide spectrum of geographic locations and missions such as: “limited intervention, conflict prevention, crisis management, consequence management, peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace enforcement, post-conflict occupation, stabilization and reconstruction, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, partnership building, and the creation of democratically accountable and capable military establishments.” For such a wide range of missions, NATO requires forces of multidimensional capabilities and skills that are expanded beyond traditional deterrence missions of the past (Binnendijk, Gompert, & Kugler, 2005, pp. 4-5).

The authors propose a possible future NATO force structure, graphically shown as a pyramid in Figure 2, corresponding to the required capabilities of the organization. Each line of the pyramid represents a required military asset for “new-era missions.” According to the Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B), the present NATO force structure is comprised of High Readiness Forces, Forces of Lower Readiness, and Long-Term Build-up Forces (NATO, 2002, pp. 1-6). Alternatively, the assessment of all elements of the pyramid reveals a different approach of the development of capabilities and organization of NATO forces. With respect to this thesis, NATO SOF (NSOF) represents a major interest for analysis.

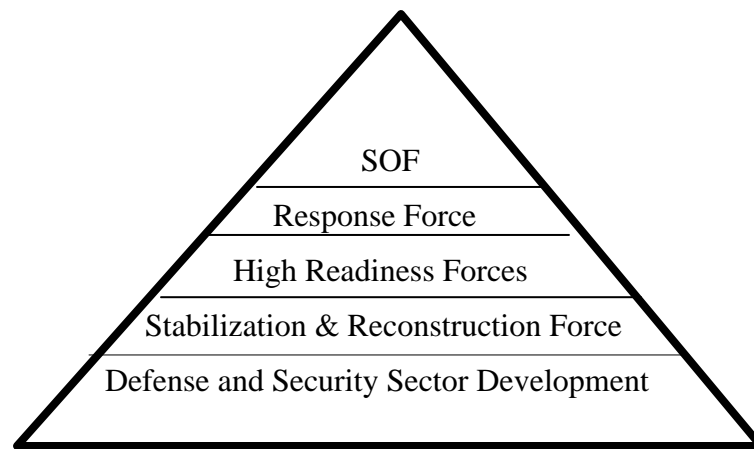


Figure 2. A NATO Framework for Future Forces and Capabilities for Expeditionary Missions (Binnendijk, Gompert, & Kugler, 2005, p. 5)

## **2. Interoperability in NATO**

NATO has a strict policy regarding standardization. This policy is important for the sound functioning of such a complex military organization, because “An Alliance of 26 nations can only effectively work together in joint operations if provisions are in place to ensure smooth cooperation” (Interoperability for Joint Operations, 2006, p. 1). Interoperability constitutes “the ability of different military organizations to conduct joint operations. These organizations can be of different nationalities or different armed services (ground, naval and air forces) or both” (p. 1). In order to effectively contribute to collective defenses, all members of the Alliance should strive to achieve operational interoperability. Therefore, NATO has developed regulations to attain its standardization policy. A basic requirement for implementation of this policy is that:

National and NATO authorities are encouraged to develop, agree and implement concepts, doctrines, procedures and designs which will enable them to achieve and maintain interoperability. This requires the establishment of the necessary levels of compatibility, interchangeability or commonality in operational, procedural, materiel, technical and administrative fields (p. 2).

As a NATO member, Bulgaria must comply with requirements not only for its forces presently designated for the Alliance, but also for the entire Bulgarian Armed Forces.

## **B. NATO SOF**

### **1. General Overview**

National SOF within NATO have proven their value being employed in various allied operations. SOF is a valuable asset for conducting low visibility activities in sensitive or denied areas. They are mobile, highly-trained, easily networked with other forces, and can be logistically self-sufficient for short periods. In addition, SOF is highly flexible and adaptable. However, one of the greatest challenges for NSOF constituent nations is that they are not organized as a single military entity that can operate under NATO command. Gompert and Smith (2006) found that although NATO has occasionally requested U.S. and allied national SOF in response to contingencies, such as those in Bosnia and Herzegovina, these forces do not have the appropriate operational capabilities for joint operations or the requisite level of preparedness (p. 1). The reason for that is the lack of a unifying and commanding military organization for national SOF within NATO.

Thus, what NATO does best – enhancing and melding multilateral capabilities for combined action – it has not done with regard to SOF. These scarce, high value forces are increasingly essential to the shared security interests of members on both sides of the Atlantic, and SOF of all countries could benefit from working together. NATO can improve in this area and should (p. 2).

A NATO ministerial meeting held June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006 in Brussels confirmed the need for changes in favor of the development of SOF capabilities. “The Alliance’s planning process will be increasingly geared to ensuring that NATO can conduct a greater number of the more likely smaller-scale operations than in the past” (NATO Sets New Level of



Ambition for Operations, 2006). One may suggest that smaller scale operations may increasingly employ special operations, and that adjustments may be related to incorporate specific planning processes of SOF. Further support for the growing importance of special operations in NATO was provided in an interview given on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006, as the newly assigned Chief of the Bulgarian General Staff General Zlatan Stoykov stated that during the NATO meeting the issue of NSOF had been raised, and that further discussions would be carried out during the next NATO ministerial meeting (Valkov, 2006). Finally, in the article *The NATO Riga Summit: A Renewed Commitment to Transformation*, Simon Serfaty states that one of the topics during the next NATO meeting will be “the coordination of Special Operations Forces to improve their interoperability for future NATO missions” (2006). Clearly, the subject of NSOF stands out as a NATO agenda for the development of “new-era mission” capabilities. One might argue that the use of SOF is primarily dictated by national issues and concerns. Yet when a state becomes a member of the Alliance and agrees to abide by the proposed regulations, it should follow the principles approved by NATO, even if they contradict the internal bureaucratic interests of the national military.

There is a requirement for NATO to build a new unifying structure for managing its SOF units. The advantage of this approach is that, on one hand, it will increase NATO operational capabilities during low-intensity crises. On the other hand, abundant national SOF already exist and the cost for NSOF headquarters, training facilities, new equipment, and exercises would be moderate. In return, NATO would develop a valuable capacity to swiftly respond to crises that demand precision, low visibility, and proportional response (Binnendijk, Gompert, & Kugler, 2005, p. 6).

## **2. Overarching Documents on NSOF**

Although presently NSOF is not organized under a unified NATO command structure and no specific doctrine on special operations is available, their employment in joint operations is defined by Chapter 8 – Special Operations of the Allied Joint Doctrine – AJP 01(B) 2002. The cornerstone document for NATO policy regarding special operations is MC 437 – NATO Special Operations Policy. Moreover, NATO Headquarters is currently developing a new doctrine, AJP 3.5, which will deal

exclusively with NSOF. Although limited in availability, there is a general basis for analyses of the NSOF concept of operations. AJP-01(B) provides valuable insights on what NATO regulations and standards regarding SOF organization, command and control (C2), and employment should be expected for the Special Forces units of the newly admitted members of the Alliance.

As mentioned in Chapter II, Bulgaria contributes to the NATO collective defense arrangement with 21 combat and combat service support units that must be operational by NATO standards no later than 2010. According to the Force Goal EG 3520, BSOF is to commit a SOF Task Force to the NATO Response Forces (NRF) (68<sup>th</sup> SFBDE, 2006).

NRF is a rapidly deployable multinational unit made up of land, air, maritime and special forces components. Numbering 24,000 troops when it reaches its full operational capability in October 2006, it will be able to start to deploy after five days' notice and sustain itself for operations lasting 30 days or longer if resupplied. The NRF will be able to deploy worldwide, as and when decided by the North Atlantic Council (Interoperability for Joint Operations, 2006, p. 6).

Considering the importance of the BSOF participation in a unit with such a high level of combat readiness, the Bulgarian military leadership must be prepared to comply with the NATO Special Operations Policy. Moreover, the future rotation of national units within NRF will require NATO standards to be adopted by all BSOF units to insure the smooth rotation of the subsequent BSOF Task Forces. Although most documents regarding special operations are classified or under development, AJP 01(B) can clarify the NATO standards for SOF for the purpose of this thesis.

### **C. SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN AJP-01(B)**

“The primary objective of AJP-01(B) is to provide a ‘capstone’ doctrine for the planning, execution and support of Allied joint operations. The publication is intended for use primarily by commanders and staffs at the operational level, but could be used at any level as a reference” (NATO, AJP-01(B), 2002). This definition of AJP-01(B) makes it a credible source for outlining basic NATO standards for special operations. Any shortfalls found in this document will likely be compensated by a more specific and comprehensive doctrine for NATO Special Operations – AJP 3.5 – which is currently under development. According to the former Chief of the G-2 department of the former BSOF

Command – at present a student at the National Defense University, Washington, DC – who had contributed to the draft of AJP 3.5, it is very similar to the 2003 U.S. Joint Publication 3-05 – Joint Doctrine for Special Operations (Personal Communication, September 23, 2006). This similarity is easily substantiated by the significant role and influence of the U.S. in NATO.

Chapter 8 of AJP-01(B) “summarizes the tasks, characteristics and principles of employment of Special Operations Forces (SOF), and provides guidance to commanders and staffs on the essential factors involved in the planning of special operations in the context of allied joint operations” (NATO, 2002, p. 8-1). This part of the doctrine includes a definition of special operations, basic tasks, characteristics, principles of employment, and planning considerations in special operations. The following section will outline the most important attributes of special operations and SOF employed in NATO combined joint operations.

### **1. Definition of Special Operations**

AJP-01(B) defines special operations as:

Military activities conducted by specially designated, organized, trained and equipped forces using operational techniques and modes of employment not standard to conventional forces. These activities are conducted across the full range of military operations (peace, crisis and conflict) independently or in co-ordination with operations of conventional forces to achieve military, political, economic and psychological objectives or a combination thereof. Political-military considerations may require covert or discreet techniques and the acceptance of a degree of physical and political risk not associated with conventional operations (NATO, 2002, p. 8-1).

According to the definition, these operations require unique forces and special techniques that do not have conventional alternatives. Furthermore, these activities can be conducted in a timely fashion to achieve a wide range of not only military but political and economic objectives as well, making them a highly valued resource for the employing authority. Special operations conducted by U.S. SOF during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2001 include most of the characteristics described above; and similarly achieved unique political and military success for the U.S. Although it was not flawless, the commitment of U.S. SOF in Afghanistan proved that SOF can

offer a suitable response to adversaries like the Taliban regime and Al Qaeda. The cost-benefit ratio was exceedingly in favor of the U.S. In an interview dated March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003, Doctor John Arquilla stated that for about two months, with the participation of about 300 SOF operatives and with the support of U.S. Air Forces and indigenous militias, the Taliban regime was defeated (Kreiser, 2003).

## **2. Special Operations Tasks**

AJP-01(B) outlines only three special operations tasks: special surveillance and reconnaissance, direct action, and military assistance. Comparing them to the nine SO tasks comprised by the US JP 3-05, the number of NATO tasks seems limited. However, AJP-01(8) states that these tasks are assigned to SOF in the context of allied joint operations, which implies that additional tasks, such as counterterrorism or unconventional warfare, may be conducted under specific circumstances. A larger set of NSOF tasks will likely be addressed in AJP 3.5.

## **3. Characteristics of Special Operations**

AJP-01(B) defines a number of characteristics of special operations, but the following are of greatest relevance. Special operations are:

- Usually of high physical and political risk, and directed at high-value, critical targets which offer the potential for high returns.
- Often politico-military in nature and require understanding, oversight and full support at Alliance/national level. They demand detailed planning and co-ordination with other commands, services, government and non-governmental agencies.
- Generally dependent on responsive and specialized maritime, land and air support.
- Usually covert or discreet in nature.
- Frequently undertaken when the use of conventional forces is, for military or political reasons, neither appropriate nor feasible.
- Usually conducted at great distance from established support bases, requiring sophisticated communications and means of infiltration, exfiltration and support to penetrate and recover from hostile, denied or politically sensitive areas.
- May require patient, long-term commitment and detailed knowledge of the conditions, languages and culture of the operational area.

- Dependent on discriminate and precise use of force, often requiring the rapid development, acquisition and employment of special weapons and equipment.
- Dependent on detailed intelligence, intimate and responsive C2, thorough planning, decentralized execution (by those who did the planning) and rigorous, detailed rehearsal (NATO, 2002, pp. 8-4 – 8-5).

All these characteristics distinguish special operations from conventional operations. If most of these features are not applied to special operations and SOF, the value of such operations and the efficiency of the corresponding forces will be drastically decreased. Likewise, if the special operations conducted by BSOF do not subscribe to the same characteristics, there is less potential of a successful outcome. The failure of a special operation could result in considerable negative consequences for Bulgarian national security. In 1980, Operation Eagle Claw was launched for the liberation of U.S. hostages held in Iran. The operation lacked the majority of the latter characteristics, and thus led to a tragic fiasco during the initial stage of the military activities. As a result, the mission was canceled which created significant negative international and internal consequences for the U.S. government (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 134-135).

#### **4. Principles of Employment of Special Operations Forces**

Considering that special operations are unconventional and complex activities, the procedures and techniques for their execution must be simple and direct. The commanding authority must clearly define and communicate its intent to the lowest tactical level through the shortest chain of C2 (NATO, 2002, p. 8-5). AJP-01(B) defines the following principles of SOF employment:

- SOF should be assigned to execute only high value tasks.
- SOF should have full access to all possible intelligence sources.
- SOF should be organized and used under clear command and control relationships.
- SOF should be provided with broad and clear mission directives.
- SOF activities must be surrounded by paramount security.

These principles constitute the foundation for the craft of special operations. Keeping in mind that SOF is a highly valuable and difficult to produce asset, its potential

should not be wasted for strategically or operationally irrelevant targets. The 1970 U.S. Raid on Son Tay Camp in Vietnam proved that without timely, detailed, and tailored intelligence, even the best planned and executed special operations may fail (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 70). Usually operations conducted by SOF require rapid response; therefore, the chain of command for SOF should be short and clear. That is why in the structure of the NATO Combined Joint Task Force, along with the land, air, and maritime component commands, the special operations component command has its independent position (NATO, 2002, p. 1-9). The elevation of U.S. SOF to the joint level was imposed upon the U.S. Armed Forces by the civilian leadership. The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act mandated the creation of a unified special operations command with direct command link to the U.S. Department of Defense and provided it with an independent funding program (USSOCOM, 2002, p. 5). “This step has given the United States an exceptionally cost-effective instrument of military action and military strategy” (Gompert & Smith, 2006). The relatively successful employment and performance of U.S. SOF after the implementation of the Goldwater-Nichols Act could be an example for appropriate SOF management for all NATO members, including Bulgaria. Expanding on the C2 principle, the necessity for clear mission directives is determined by the peculiarities of the centralized planning and the decentralized execution of special operations. SOF can not efficiently operate without applying “sufficient flexibility to react to an adversary’s activities, and the necessary authority to adjust the SOF plan to cope with changing conditions during the conduct of their mission” (NATO, 2002, p. 8-7). Finally, but no less important, the principle of security facilitates not only the successful execution of a special operation but the effectiveness of the whole planning and preparation process. The principles of employment of SOF are mutually related. The violation of one of them affects the implementation of the others, thus decreasing the probability for success of a SO.

Chapter 8 of AJP-01(B) concludes with planning considerations in special operations. This section encompasses elements such as employment, integration, security, planning, intelligence, logistics, etc. The most essential of them have been already discussed in the previous sections and the rest are not essential to this thesis.

AJP-01(B) provides a concise and accurate outline of NATO Special Operations in the context of Allied Joint Operations. Although the standards for national SOF units are assigned in specific classified documents, AJP-01(B) defines the basic requirements for NSOF. When compared to the U.S. Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, there are numerous similarities between the NATO and U.S. Doctrine. Recall NATO policy on interoperability and standardization – all members that participate with national components in the defense system of the Alliance must implement NATO doctrine and procedures. Therefore, the Bulgarian military leadership, representing a NATO member state with SOF units participating in the allied force structure, should develop a new Bulgarian Special Operations Doctrine and manage BSOF according to the requirements of Chapter 8 – Special Operations in the AJP-01(B) and NATO Special Operations Doctrine – AJP 3.5. Bulgaria greatly relies on the security provided by NATO; hence, the development of BSOF in accordance with NATO standards is not only in favor of the Alliance, but also serves to enhance Bulgarian national security.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

NATO is a vital pillar for Bulgarian national security. It supports the national interests of both its new and old members. The growing number of participating countries and the changing nature of contemporary threats impose gradual transformation within the Alliance. The acquisition of specific operational capabilities is another important goal for NATO, and the development of NSOF is a central objective for this process of transformation. In the near future, NSOF is expected to be organized under a unified NATO command and will be sustained in accordance with the latest NATO Special Operations Doctrine. Considering the strict standardization policy for achieving interoperability within the Alliance, all members should adopt and implement the doctrine and policies of NATO. In that regard, the Bulgarian military leadership should adjust its policy on special operations to address the standards of the Alliance in order to develop viable BSOF capabilities not only to satisfy NATO requirements, but to enhance Bulgarian national security as well. Considering the organizational position of BSOF within the Bulgarian military hierarchy and recent downsizing of BSOF, a substantial discord exists between the present management and capabilities of BSOF and the current

NATO standards, principles, and characteristics for the employment of NSOF. Therefore, the gaps between Bulgarian and NATO employment of special operations should be carefully analyzed and rectified.



## **VI. SHORTFALLS BETWEEN BSOF CAPABILITIES, NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIREMENTS, AND NATO STANDARDS**

As aforementioned in the previous chapters, according to Bulgarian political and military official documents, BSOF is considered as a small but significant guardian for Bulgarian national and global security. Moreover, CEDESOF states that BSOF is the most important component of the Bulgarian Armed Forces (2000, p. 25). As such, it is part of the national and allied defense system; thus, anticipating the challenges of contemporary threats for Bulgarian national and global security.

Analyzing the risks for global security, Sloan (2005) found that conventional strategists will need time to adapt to threats like terrorism (p. xxiii). Furthermore, in 2001, the U.S. combat experience in Afghanistan demonstrated that when U.S. forces were not able to accomplish the conventional plan quick enough, U.S. SOF proved its utility as a valuable cost-effective unconventional military asset by successfully defeating the Taliban and Al Qaeda (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 2005, p. 9). According to the U.S. National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism (NMSP for WOT) Annex C, Operations “...establishes Commander of United States Special Operations Forces Command as the supported command for the GWT” (2006. p. 28). Apparently, the asymmetric and irregular nature of modern security risks requires a more flexible, innovative, and unconventional military approach for a crisis response; such an approach may successfully be provided by national SOF. Therefore, BSOF, as a military asset with unconventional capabilities, should fully address the requirements of Bulgarian national and military security strategies.

As a NATO member, Bulgaria faces new responsibilities that contribute to the collective defense of the Alliance. In exchange for the security offered by NATO and for future participation in its operations, the state should synchronize its operational military capabilities with the requirements of the Alliance. Despite limited national resources, Bulgarian security is of a paramount concern, and it should be protected by relevant military assets. In order to be a rapid response military asset capable of swift projection abroad in the interest of protecting national and global security, BSOF must also address

the requirements of NATO SOF (NSOF). This is not a bureaucratic reflex, but an alignment of BSOF with the latest doctrinal developments in NATO Special Operations. With respect to this thesis, if gaps between capabilities of BSOF and the National and Military Security Strategies and NATO regulations exist, the identified shortfalls must be properly analyzed and rectified.

## **A. BSOF AND CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS FOR BULGARIAN NATIONAL SECURITY AND MILITARY STRATEGY**

### **1. SOF as a Valuable Asset Protecting National Security**

As discussed in Chapter I, one of the concerns for Bulgarian national security is the involvement of the state in a conventional conflict triggered by its neighbors or in a crisis initiated in the adjacent unstable regions such as the Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia, and North Africa. The Bulgarian NSC asserts that the probability for a large scale conflict in the Balkan region is small (1998). However, this possibility should be estimated and planned for from a political and military perspective. In that regard, the ANSR states that the Bulgarian defense is no longer directed at the neutralization of a specific enemy. The Bulgarian Armed Forces is expected to develop required operational capabilities in response to contemporary risks and threats for national security (2006). The smaller probability for conventional wars and the growing danger posed by terrorism, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and WMD, radical Islamism, and the occurrence of low-intensity conflicts in close proximity to the Republic of Bulgaria reduces the significance of large conventional forces for national security. Therefore, the Bulgarian political leadership and military authorities launched programs for the modernization of the armed forces directed to the establishment of smaller, multi-purpose, flexible, and rapidly deployable military units. Moreover, the dynamic global and local security environment predetermined by predominantly asymmetric threats requires unconventional response by forces with the latter characteristics. For example, the U.S. has chosen the following solution:

The small size, unique capabilities, and self-sufficiency (for short periods of time) of SOF operational units provide the United States with feasible and appropriate military responses. These responses may not entail the

degree of political liability or risk of escalation normally associated with employment of inherently larger or more visible conventional forces (JP 3-05, p. vii).

Moreover, special operations can successfully be used in support of the foreign policy of a state. JP 3-05 asserts:

SO can be designed and conducted to influence the will of foreign leadership and/or populations to create conditions favorable to US strategic aims or objectives. Alternatively, SO may be principally offensive, of high physical and political risk, and directed at high-value, and often time-sensitive targets (p. vii).

The listed characteristics portray SOF as an asset that can be beneficially utilized by both political and military authorities not only in response to a crisis, but in proactive low-visibility operations for preventing an emergency from occurring. According to official political and military sources such as the National Security Concept and Military Doctrine and Strategy, Bulgarian national security requires a similar set of unconventional military capabilities. Moreover, according to the analysis of the aforementioned documents in Chapter III, the Bulgarian politico-military leadership relies on BSOF as a military asset capable of supporting national security policy. If only properly planned and conducted, can special operations save valuable national resources while protecting Bulgarian national security and strategic interests. As a minimum, to use BSOF for conducting special operations against high-value and time-sensitive targets with political or strategic military importance in the interest of Bulgarian national security, it must be suitably organized, trained, equipped, and employed. BSOF must be provided with the latest detailed intelligence in order to successfully plan and conduct an ordered operation. Furthermore, BSOF units must possess the necessary strategic airlift capabilities to swiftly reach the assigned area of operation within the state or abroad. These units should be equipped with the most advanced weapons and communication assets. Although Special Forces are relatively self-sufficient for short periods, they should be provided with requisite integral logistic support. Comparing BSOF capabilities with the requirements listed above, there are several significant shortfalls.

## **2. Shortfalls between the Requirements of Bulgarian National Security and the Capabilities of BSOF**

### ***a. Inappropriate Command and Control of BSOF***

“Successful execution of SO requires clear, responsive, command and control (C2) by an appropriate special operations forces (SOF) C2 element” (JP 3-05, 2003, p. viii). Special operations directed at high-value and time-sensitive targets require swift, centralized planning and direct line of command from the highest political or military authority to the lowest unit, which will conduct the operation. Logically, this prerequisite suggests that BSOF should be organizationally located as close as possible to the highest military commanding body – in this case, and as a minimum – the General Staff (GS).

The General Staff is a main body for strategic command and control of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria in peacetime and war. In war it directs the Armed Forces’ transition from peacetime to wartime status, the establishment of the defensive groupings, the preparation and conduct of the operations and the territorial defense. The General Staff activities and functions are designed to ... ensure the accomplishment of the tasks as determined by the national security and defense guiding documents (Military Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2002).

Contrary to the latter notion, BSOF is organized under the direct C2 of the Chief of the Army (CEDESOF, 2000, p. 16). Thus, the line of command for BSOF consists of several organizational layers. In case of emergent employment of BSOF, the orders will be issued from the Chief of the Ministry of Defense to the GS; the Chief of the GS will relay them to the Chief of the Army; he will alert the BSOF department within the Army Headquarters; and finally the assigned unit will receive the orders for detailed planning. With this long chain of C2, an urgent SOF response to a crisis is almost impossible. Alternatively, according to the Organization Design theory of Mintzberg, a dynamic, hostile, and relatively complex environment requires flexible organizations with centralized control and flat hierarchical design, capable to rapidly respond to emergencies (1981, p. 5). As previously discussed, terrorism is envisioned as the most probable threat for Bulgarian national security. Moreover, crises related to asymmetric threats usually create a dynamic and relatively complex security

environment; thus, requiring a very high level of operational readiness and centralized national control. Therefore, with the present line of C2, BSOF is sub-optimally configured and less likely to address immediate threats to national security. BSOF can successfully conduct proactive special operations at a political or strategic military level only if its chain of command is compressed and unequivocal.

Moreover, Bulgaria relies on insufficient CT assets provided by its civilian law-enforcement agencies.

Answering to the questions of the UN Counterterrorism Committee whether Special Operations Forces activities against terrorist threats are envisioned in the implementation of the Bulgarian Integrated Counterterrorism Strategy, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria only replied that “There is an ongoing process of providing additional equipment for the Specialized Tactical Rapid Response Units, their training, and work on secondary legislation regulating their operation” (Fourth Report on The Activities of The Republic of Bulgaria To Counter Terrorism, 2004, p. 6).

In this answer, the Bulgarian leadership refers only to the CT tactical units of the law-enforcement agencies, while the ANSR states that military forces, particularly BSOF, constitute a major CT asset (2005). Moreover, if in response to terrorist threats Bulgarian authorities primarily rely on the CT units of the national law-enforcement agencies, the CT effort could achieve limited success. Normally, these units do not possess organic assets for a strategic long-range projection and capabilities to operate in hostile territory and inaccessible terrain. Alternatively, BSOF at least has developed appropriate tactical capabilities to be independently employed in CT operations under the latter conditions. Moreover, it can be supported with air or maritime projection assets provided by the armed services of the Bulgarian Armed Forces.

The significance of this issue is based on the probability of a terrorist attack, for example, hostage taking. If such a crisis occurs within the territory of the state, the CT units of the police are more likely to be employed because they are properly tailored to operate in urban environments and easily accessible areas. However, if the hostage crisis takes place in a remote forbidding area, inaccessible terrain or abroad, then

the latter CT units could not be effectively employed. They lack appropriate projection assets, training, and equipment to conduct hostage rescue operations under the aforementioned conditions. Alternatively, the Bulgarian Military Doctrine states that military units, particularly BSOF, can be employed in response to terrorist threats domestically or abroad (MD, 2002). In the case of the kidnapping of a high-profile Bulgarian political or military representative in the mountain areas of Albania or Kosovo, for instance, and if the local authorities lack capabilities to conduct a hostage rescue operation, they could give permission to the Bulgarian government to initiate an independent CT operation. Under such circumstances, the best choice for the Bulgarian leadership could be the employment of BSOF. Recalling the present C2 arrangements for BSOF and the limited CT capabilities of the law-enforcement agencies, Bulgaria does not possess effective assets to address the challenges of terrorism. These limited CT capabilities contradict the requirements of the National Security and Military Strategies. Therefore, in order to be developed as an effective CT asset, BSOF should be organized and employed according to the suggested standards for C2.

***b. The Lack of a Joint and Unified Command***

The Bulgarian CEDESOF, written in 2000, is the only military document which directly refers to BSOF. Presently, the Bulgarian military leadership is developing an updated Doctrine for Special Operations. According to the CEDESOF, BSOF includes only Army units; in case of necessity, these units can be augmented with Navy Special Forces detachments. Additionally, combat service support will be provided by Army Engineer Corps and NBC units; strategic aerial and amphibious projections will be ensured by the Air Force and the Navy (2001, p. 16). SOF units of the armed services and the necessary supporting projection assets are not unified under a single special operations command. Moreover, as previously outlined, in June 2006, the BSOF Command for Army SOF was downsized and reorganized into a small department under Army HQ C2. Recalling the dismal performance of U.S. SOF prior to the implementation of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986, one may suggest that the lack of an independent commanding body that unifies the Special Forces units from all services of the Bulgarian Armed Forces is a factor that could significantly decrease the operational capabilities of BSOF. The present posture of BSOF is less likely to address Bulgarian national security

requirements. BSOF is also not aligned with the recommendations outlined in CEDESOF for the further development of these forces.

In Chapter 10 – Vision for Development of BSOF – CEDESOF states that BSOF is one of the most important components of the Bulgarian Armed Forces; therefore, it will be further developed according to the contemporary special operations trends, the doctrine, and procedures of NATO (2001, p. 25). As mentioned in the previous chapter, AJP-01 B asserts special operations principles and regulations that are in total disagreement with the latest changes in BSOF. While the Allied Joint Doctrine states that NSOF should be organized under a unified component command at the joint level, BSOF is organized and managed in an opposite way. Moreover, U.S. JP 3-05 supports NATO AJP-01 B stating that “SO are inherently joint. Although they may be conducted as a single-Service operation, most are planned and executed as a joint operation. SO routinely require joint support and coordination” (JP 3-05, 2003, p. I-2). Being at a lower level as an Army subordinated organization, BSOF will be insufficiently provided with vital intelligence, aerial or naval projection assets, and specific technological service support. The long and complex line of command and coordination between services will hinder the swift planning, preparation, and execution of special operations not only against asymmetric threats, but during conventional campaigns as well. The following examples portray U.S. experiences in the improper C2 of SOF. In 1980, During Operation Eagle Claw and in 1983, during Operation Urgent Fury, U.S. SOF were employed improperly as a part of a large mixed military unit, with “confused JTF’s chain of command” (Vandenbrucke, 1993, p. 134) or with “little or no integration of the units of special operations forces with one another or with the conventional commanders” (Marquis, 1997, p. 106). Furthermore, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm were the biggest military campaigns since World War II in which U.S. SOF were deployed.

Nevertheless, although SOF had a useful role to play in the war, they were essentially marginal players. But the Iraq case is important because it illustrates the dangers and difficulties of employing Special Operations Forces on a conventional battlefield (USDOD, 1992, p. J-1).

*c. The Friction in Operational Planning.*

The CEDESOF states that the broad planning for operations that are assigned to BSOF is carried out by Army HQ. Only detailed planning of specific tasks in an operation is a responsibility of the former BSOF Command (presently a department level organization) (2001, p. 22). Such planning arrangements may cause conflict in employment of BSOF. Usually the senior military organization (e.g., Army HQ) monopolizes the decision-making process during the planning phase, potentially issuing inappropriate orders regarding the combat employment of BSOF units. Considering that the BSOF Department is directly subordinated to Army HQ, it is more likely to be forced to implement imposed recommendations or to execute issued orders, instead of equally participating in the planning and decision-making process. American SOF were similarly treated prior to the creation of USSOCOM. Vandenbroucke explains the reasons for the latter bureaucratic phenomenon:

Part of the problem is the bureaucratic parochialism, or the natural tendency of organizational units to focus chiefly on their own primary missions and entailed needs and practices. As a result, individual military services often pay limited attention to the needs of other services with which they are periodically called upon to work and to the requirements of smooth interaction (1993, p. 158).

Moreover, Army HQ does not have its own SO expertise. Therefore, a potential outcome is special operations improperly planned and BSOF misused not only during a conventional campaign, but also in a peacetime crisis planning process. For prevention of such negative consequences in the U.S. Armed Forces, JP 3-05 states: “SOF are most effective when SO are fully integrated into the overall plan (war or Military Operations Other Than War). Successful execution of SO requires clear, responsive C2 by an appropriate SOF C2 element” (2003, p. III-1). If this standard is not fulfilled, the principle of decentralization is more likely to be violated. “While SO personnel should be included in centralized planning at the combatant commander and subordinate JFC levels, successful SO requires decentralized planning and execution for individual missions. Independent judgment and effective coordination by SOF leaders at every echelon are vital to successful SO” (p. I-9). BSOF is an Army subordinated organization, and its planning and decision-making process is conducted at lower than the



joint level; therefore, it can be more readily influenced or interfered with by the conventional considerations of Army planners. Lieutenant Colonel Yavor Mattev – a former Chief of the G-2 department of the former BSOF Command, currently a student at the National Defense University, Washington, DC – states that during annual joint exercises of the Bulgarian Armed Forces the Army HQ usually plans the BSOF

employment without any coordination with SOF representatives. The assigned tasks for BSOF in support of conventional operations are directly ordered by the superior military authority (Personal Communication, September 9, 2006).

Such interference is a normal bureaucratic reflex for organizations with a long vertical hierarchy. Although general principles and rules are enforced, senior bureaucratic organizations impose their will and interests over the subordinated units, often, disregarding their level of expertise. Bolman and Deal (2003) found that “the usual mistake is assuming that the right idea and legitimate authority ensure success” (p. 228). Military organizations are conservative bureaucratic structures with relatively centralized control. The major difference between military and civilian organizations is the level of submission and obedience to the formal rules. Although military organizations are based on the strict compliance with the designated regulations and almost complete subordination to the superior authority, they are permeated by inter-service “political rivalry” and strife for bureaucratic domination. Such organizational environment is more likely to create hostility which may result in irrational decisions and incorrect choices (Allison, 1999). Furthermore, inappropriate planning and decision-making may negatively affect the execution of a special operation with potentially dangerous and costly consequences for Bulgarian national security. U.S. experience in planning and execution of strategic special operations before 1986 is exemplified by the following observations:

The Bay of Pigs and the Iran rescue mission were disasters that exacted in a high price in human life and US prestige... Moreover, close examination of these episodes confirms that...recurrent problems have plagued US strategic special operations. Faulty intelligence, poor interagency and interservice cooperation and coordination, provision of inadequate advice to decision makers, wishful thinking, and overcontrol of mission execution by officials

far removed from the theater of operations have repeatedly jeopardized the ability of the United States to conduct such missions successfully (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 152).

***d. Misusing BSOF in Peace Support Operations***

As aforementioned, the Bulgarian NSC and MS envision the deployment of Bulgarian military units, particularly BSOF, in Peace Support Operations as a significant prerequisite in support of national security. The CEDESOF asserts that "If BSOF is employed independently to conduct an operation, then the general planning is a responsibility of the BSOF Department, and the detailed planning is completed by the assigned BSOF unit" (2001, p. 22). Yet up to now, BSOF was employed only once as part of the Bulgarian Light Infantry Battalion, which participated in the post-conflict recovery of Iraq in 2003 to 2005. Although it was an excellent opportunity for BSOF to take part in the operation as an independent task force, the Army chiefs decided to establish ad-hoc SOF teams from individual volunteers and to directly subordinate them to the Battalion Commander. However, the Battalion Commander did not have the expertise and the HQ capabilities to appropriately employ them. Instead of conducting SO and supporting the operational activities of the Bulgarian contingent through accomplishment of tasks such as SR, FID, DA or PSYOP, BSOF's ad-hoc teams were tasked for very important person (VIP) protection, regular patrolling, convoying, operating checkpoints, and other conventional tasks (68<sup>th</sup> SFBDE, 2006). This case is an example of how BSOF is misused and mismanaged by its senior commanding authority represented by Army HQ. Such an inappropriate employment not only conventionalized BSOF, but also deteriorated the security of the Bulgarian battalion in Iraq which caused negative political implications for Bulgarian domestic and foreign policy.

In December 2003, after an act of terrorism against the Bulgarian base in Kerbala, five Bulgarians were killed and dozens were wounded. This episode created significant public tension, and the government was pressured to withdraw the Bulgarian contingent from Iraq. Although the battalion was not withdrawn, the tragedy created a national political crisis which affected the military credibility and the international image of the state. If BSOF was properly used as an independent task force for executing SO

and supporting the operational activities of the Bulgarian battalion in Iraq, the level of security in the region would have been higher and the bombing of the Bulgarian base in Kerbala might have not occurred.

*e. The Lack of Independent Funding for BSOF*

The subordination of BSOF under Army command entails another negative consequence. According to the CEDESOF, one of the priorities for the development and modernization of BSOF is its procurement with the latest weapons, special technical assets, and advanced equipment (2001, p. 7). Moreover, some of the missions assigned to BSOF may be conducted in isolated and politically sensitive regions; therefore, they will require complex technical mechanisms for C2 and communication, advanced assets for aerial or amphibious infiltration and extraction, and reliable systems for logistic support (p. 7). The fulfillment of these requirements facilitates the successful accomplishment of special operations, especially in an environment of continuously evolving irregular warfare such as terrorism. Although the procurement of BSOF with special weapons and equipment is not very costly, in comparison to the acquisition costs of the other armed services, the Army is less likely to pay the bill of a subordinated “step-child” organization. On one hand, it is interested in obtaining funds dedicated for its junior member, but on the other hand, the same money will be easily shifted away from its beneficiary as soon as a unique or unexpected financial need arises.

This phenomenon is explained by Bolman and Deal: “Inside and outside any organization, a variety of interest groups, each with its own agenda, compete for scarce resources. There is never enough to give all parties what they want, so there will always be struggles” (2003, p. 327). Therefore, one of the important results of the U.S. Goldwater-Nichols Act after 1986 was the establishment of an independent financial program for U.S. SOF. To decrease the “conventional” interference with the SOF budget, the Congress created a new Major Force Program (MFP 11 – the so-called “SOF checkbook”) (USSOCOM, 2002). Having gained organizational and financial independence, U.S. SOF continued its evolution as a new, progressive military organization defending national security and strategic interests of the U.S. Alternately, by

being a subordinated organization, BSOF is more likely to be stripped of its resources in favor of the Army. This negative trend leaves BSOF operationally undermined and inherently undersupplied. Consequently, the reduced SO capabilities may deteriorate Bulgarian national security and could negatively affect the strategic interest of the state.

## **B. BSOF CAPABILITIES AND NATO STANDARDS**

The previous chapter outlined the NATO concept for Joint Special Operations. As previously mentioned, NATO is a strategic military alliance for Bulgarian national security. Since 2004, the Bulgarian defense has been planned in the context of Article 5 – the collective defense of NATO. Therefore, for effective and successful membership, Bulgaria should adopt NATO military regulations and develop its military according to the standards of the Alliance. Considering that Bulgaria has been a NATO member for more than two years, its armed forces, particularly BSOF, should have already progressed with the process of military integration.

### **1. NATO Principles for Special Operations and BSOF Requirements**

In regards to the special operations standards posed by the AJP-01 (B), BSOF has several substantial differences that may cause friction during its participation in NATO combined joint operations. The shortfalls between BSOF and the regulations for NATO SOF stand out in the principles of employment of NSOF. One of these principles states that “SOF should be organized and used under clear command and control relationships” (AJP-01 (B), 2002). Based on the previously discussed shortfall between BSOF capabilities and requirements of Bulgarian national security and military strategy, in reference to the C2 arrangements between BSOF and Army HQ, there is a discord between Bulgarian military regulations and NATO standards. For maximum utilization of its military assets, in the structure of NATO Combined Joint Task Force, along with the land, air, and maritime component commands, special operations component command has its equal-in-rights place (2002, p. 1-9). The reason for that is similar to the previously suggested explanation regarding BSOF C2 arrangements. The fact that NATO and U.S. Armed Forces have similar C2 arrangements for their SOF is an unambiguous signal for the Bulgarian political and military leadership. Considering the combat experience and operational capabilities of the U.S. Armed Forces and NATO, the solution for their SOF C2 is predetermined by a rational military estimate for superior combat efficiency.

The violation of the principle for compressed and unequivocal C2 entails infringements of the other SO principles. For example, a complicated chain of command, placing SOF under subordination of a single armed service, will more likely encourage commanders to employ SOF units to execute low value tasks. Moreover, if it is not positioned at the joint level, SOF will not have full access to all possible intelligence sources and requisite resources. Having several commanding layers, SOF will not be provided with the required operational security to plan, prepare, and execute a SO. Therefore, the principle of compressed and unequivocal C2 for SOF is of paramount importance; if it is violated, a SO is much less likely to be successful. Thus, BSOF organizational design and line of C2 should be tailored in accordance with the latest trends of U.S. and NATO SOF transformation. Once again, Bulgaria is a NATO member, and its armed forces should adapt the doctrinal standards of the Alliance. This also enhances unit proficiency – BSOF should train as it fights. Alternatively, the implementation of double standards for employment of BSOF – in NATO operations and for national needs – is inappropriate and unacceptable dichotomy. If the Bulgarian Armed Forces, particularly BSOF, fail to meet NATO standards, the national military units will probably be rejected from participation in the allied forces, which may risk the membership in NATO, military credibility, and the national security of the Republic of Bulgaria.

## **2. NATO Requirements and BSOF Roles**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, AJP-01(B) includes only three special operations tasks: special surveillance and reconnaissance (SSR), direct action (DA), and military assistance (MA). The tasks are limited because of the nature of SO in the context of allied joint operations. The complete set of NSOF tasks will probably be addressed in AJP 3.5. Recalling that the new NATO doctrine for SO is expected to be similar to the U.S. Doctrine for Joint SO, the missing NATO SOF tasks from those listed above should be: unconventional warfare (UW), counterterrorism (CT), counter-proliferation of WMD, civil affairs (CA) operations, psychological operations (PSYOP), and information operations (IO).

On the other hand, according to the CEDESOF, BSOF conducts the following set of SO tasks: direct action, search and rescue, special reconnaissance, psychological operations, supporting activities in counter-proliferation of WMD, countering drug and arms trafficking, and counterterrorism, civil military cooperation operations, support to information operations, and humanitarian operations (2001, p. 10-14). Although it is quite a large set of missions, important tasks such as MA and UW are missing in the Bulgarian concept for SO; moreover, tasks like UW and CT gained exceptional significance after September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. As aforementioned, in 2001, due to the excellent utilization of UW, U.S. SOF achieved quick victory over the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Considering the latest developments in Iraq and Afghanistan, the indirect approach for dealing with insurgents and terrorists is gaining in importance.

Recently, the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO Forces in Europe, General James Jones, urged Bulgaria to actively participate in NATO operations not with small military units under international command, but with larger contingents under Bulgarian command (NATO demanded more active Bulgarian participation in the operations of the Alliance, 2006). Keeping in mind that the Bulgarian Armed Forces, particularly BSOF, should participate with a growing number of units in NATO operations worldwide, tasks like MA, UW, and PSYOP should be comprehensively utilized for the complete employment of BSOF. The reason for the latter recommendation is that the present Bulgarian CEDESOF is limited only to the PSYOP and supporting activities in CT operations. Alternatively, as discussed in Chapter III, according to the LTVDBAF, in addition to the downsizing of the BSOF Command, the PSYOP battalion is expected to be reduced to company size and be shifted away from the BSOF community. Thus, an important task in support of indirect special operations will remain without a specialized unit to conduct it. On one hand, BSOF are not assigned with missions like UW and FID; on the other hand, an important PSYOP unit is shifted away from the Bulgarian Special Forces community. All these negative factors conventionalize BSOF, degrading their strategic capabilities. Apparently, there is considerable discord not only between the Bulgarian CEDESOF and the NATO Doctrine AJP-01 (B), but between the

organizational transformation of BSOF and the latest operational requirements for employment of SOF against the contemporary threats for both global and Bulgarian national security.

### **C. SUMMARY**

Considering the nature of the contemporary security environment, Bulgarian national security demands new military forces with adjusted operational capabilities. Large conventional armies may lose their relevance in favor of smaller, flexible, easy deployable, culturally attuned forces with unconventional capabilities. The Bulgarian Armed Forces possess such a military asset – BSOF. Moreover, SO might be considered a basic military approach for proactive response to asymmetric threats that may endanger Bulgarian national security. However, for successful execution of SO, BSOF should meet a set of necessary requirements predetermined by the demands of national security and NATO regulations. The analysis of how the requirements of Bulgarian national security and NATO SOF standards are addressed by BSOF presents a number of substantial shortfalls.

The strategic importance of SO requires compressed and unequivocal C2; therefore, BSOF should be placed at the joint level – along with the Army, Navy, and Air Force under the command of the GS – which is the most senior military commanding organization of the Bulgarian Armed Forces. Contrary to that notion, BSOF is subordinated to the Army, and its line of C2 is extended and complex. Such C2 arrangements impede the employment of BSOF against asymmetric threats; thus, negatively affecting Bulgarian national security. Moreover, SOF of the three armed services are not unified under an independent command, which should exercise unilateral command, control, management, and coordination of the subordinated units. The lack of a commanding body for all BSOF undermines the jointness of SO and impedes the strategic long-range projection and service support for Special Forces. Furthermore, BSOF is not provided with an independent funding program; thus, possibly remaining inherently undersupplied.

During deployments for participation in PSO, BSOF are tailored as ad-hoc units and are not organized into SOF Task Forces. This pattern of employment of BSOF leads

to misusing of its assets and wasting their expertise. Regarding the NATO standards for SO determined by AJP-01 (B), the present management of BSOF is in violation of general SO principles. Moreover, the SO tasks outlined in the Bulgarian CEDESOF do not address important missions such as FID and UW, and CT is mentioned as a collateral task. Alternatively, PSYOP is a core task, but, due to the latest reorganizations, there are no units available to conduct this mission. All aforementioned shortfalls detrimentally affect not only BSOF, but also undermine national security and military strategies as well as the NATO membership of the Republic of Bulgaria. Therefore, an updated conception for management, C2, and utilization of BSOF should be proposed to the Bulgarian politico-military leadership. The suggested model for future BSOF must completely address the previously identified shortfalls.



## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Bulgarian national security is a naturally critical factor for the progressive development of the state and the well-being of its citizens. The political and military leadership is responsible for making decisions for Bulgarian security while appropriately addressing the challenges of both current and future threats. The most considerable risks for Bulgarian national security today are terrorism, rise of radical Islamism, illegal transportation of nuclear weapons and WMD, ethnic crises in the Balkan region, organized crime and its possible symbiosis with terrorism, and illegal trafficking of people, drugs, and weapons (ANSR, 2006). Most of these threats are considered asymmetric. The geo-strategic location of Bulgaria as a crossroad between three continents – Europe, Africa, and Asia – and the Black Sea coast facilitates the development of the aforementioned risks. Moreover, Bulgaria is already a part of NATO and on January 1st, 2007, it will be a member of the European Union. The state actively participates in the global war on terror with military units in Afghanistan and Iraq. Supporting the agendas of these global political, military, and economic organizations, the state may well be considered a high-profile target not only for terrorist and radical Islamic organizations but also for international organized crime. Therefore, Bulgarian national security could face considerable challenges, and the Bulgarian leadership bears growing responsibility caused by the participation in the aforementioned organizations. As part of the security arsenal of the state, particularly the armed forces, BSOF should be ready to address both conventional military and irregular asymmetric threats and defend Bulgarian national security.

Alternatively, the probability for large-scale wars between conventional national armies in the region has decreased. Therefore, Bulgarian defense policy has been modified to develop military capabilities – that already exist in BSOF – in response to crises or contingencies different from conventional wars. The transformed armed forces will likely be comprised of “combat-efficient, multipurpose, relatively self-sufficient, properly equipped, and highly mobile military units with joint capabilities for deployment domestically or abroad” (ANSR, 2006). Most of these requirements fit the characteristics

of the BSOF – professional, flexible, mobile, specially equipped, interoperable, and maintaining the highest operational readiness (CEDESOF, 2000, p. 8). This similarity emphasizes the growing relevance of BSOF as a military guardian of Bulgarian national security, as it is indirectly stated by the National Security Concept, the Military Doctrine, and the Military Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria. Furthermore, considering the NATO partnership of Bulgaria, its armed forces, particularly BSOF, must address the military standards of the Alliance.

SOF is inherently designed to support or lead both armed forces and law-enforcement agencies in peace and war. It should be capable of supporting conventional and conducting special (unconventional) military operations. With its unique military expertise, means for strategic projection, communications, and support, SOF possesses the potential to assist and complement the operational limitations of law-enforcement agencies against terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons and WMD, and other non-military contingencies. All these peculiarities define SOF as a valuable military asset capable of conducting operations with politico-military relevance in response to the external or internal challenges posed by the contemporary risks for the security of a state. Moreover, if properly tailored, employed, and equipped, SOF can operate within its own territory or abroad; thus, complementing the operational limitations of the conventional forces and civilian law-enforcement agencies.

However, recalling the previously identified shortfalls of BSOF, the question is whether the Bulgarian military leadership underestimates the utility of this asset and the benefits of its proper development and employment. The answer may be found in certain bureaucratic organizational biases within the Bulgarian military. The inter-service rivalry among the military organizations for scarce resources and bureaucratic dominance is another factor that may negatively affect BSOF. Usually, the politicians are advised by military experts on specific issues related to the defense of the state, but some proposed solutions are likely to support the organizational interest of a particular armed service and, consequently, not the requirements of Bulgarian national security. In the context of his Organizational Behavior Model, Graham Allison observes the same phenomenon:

“...The drives for efficiency and identity in organizational logic highlights instances when this logic of appropriateness produces behavior at odds with actions states should rationally have chosen...” (1999, p. 159).

Some might think that the problem is the inherited military culture of the Warsaw Pact. But prior to 2001, BSOF was actually subordinated to the General Staff; therefore, the likely reason for its present organizational grievances is embedded in the organizational interests of the armed services. Once the Army has achieved control over BSOF, it will be very difficult for conventional commanders to give away this most capable military organization. Keeping BSOF under the Army's control is justified by the opportunity for acquiring additional relatively scarce resources and expanding the conventional hierarchy and influence. Moreover, the Bulgarian armed services are in permanent bureaucratic confrontation; therefore, the emergence of a new service organization could further threaten their bureaucratic interests. In addition to that, conventional commanders have always been envious of elite forces. This is why BSOF have been negatively influenced by the conventional leadership of the Bulgarian Armed Forces.

Furthermore, NATO closely monitors the reforms in the Bulgarian Armed Forces, but its representatives still only diplomatically urge the Bulgarian politico-military leadership to implement the allied standards to BSOF. Probably in the recent future NATO will take a firmer position on this issue, especially regarding the approved Bulgaria Forces Goals related to the military integration of the Bulgarian Armed Forces. Although NATO encourages the Bulgarian military leadership to transform BSOF according to allied standards, it still respects the national position on BSOF. Alternatively, if the Bulgarian Armed Forces fail to address the allied requirements for interoperability, it could seriously endanger Bulgarian membership in NATO. Therefore, for being a capable guardian of Bulgarian national security and a credible military asset of NATO, BSOF should be tailored and managed in response to the challenges of the contemporary threats and according to the latest doctrinal trends in the Alliance.

## **A. SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Required Organizational Design, C2, and Support for BSOF**

BSOF should be a military asset capable of responding to crises with political and strategic relevance. As discussed in the previous chapter, its position in the military hierarchy of the Bulgarian Armed Forces as an Army subordinated asset violates the principle of special operations for a compressed and unequivocal line of C2. Although a need has not occurred yet, it could be very difficult for BSOF to be utilized in short notice and in a proactive manner in response to a challenge to Bulgarian national security. This limitation contradicts the security requirements of the NSC and the MS. Moreover, SOF of the armed services are not organized under a unified command, which decreases the efficiency of their C2 and joint operational capabilities. Present organizational arrangements complicate the provision of BSOF with strategic projection assets, combat service, and logistic support from the armed services. Furthermore, as a military service's subordinated organization, BSOF is vulnerable to the inter-service political rivalry and may easily be deprived of finances for obtaining modern weapons and special equipment. Although the funds for SOF are a small fraction of the overall military budget, superior military organizations often consider their own needs a priority. That is why BSOF is threatened to remain financially underprovided and inherently undersupplied with essential special equipment. Likewise, this was true of U.S. SOF:

But almost all of the elite units . . . faced considerable bureaucratic hostility-enmity translated into effective harassment. Even when backed by top political leaders, elite units were restrained by petty maneuvers such as withholding of recruits or supplies. Bureaucratic hostility operated in more subtle ways as well-the regular civilian and military bureaucracies stigmatized elite units. This was particularly true in the case of the Special Forces... (Cohen, 1978, p. 95)

All these shortfalls greatly diminish the operational capabilities of BSOF and may negatively affect Bulgarian national security.

Therefore, Bulgarian Special Operations Forces of all armed services should be unified under a single command directly subordinated to the top military commanding organization of the Bulgarian Armed Forces – the General Staff – as it was before 2001. The unified BSOF Command should provide a compressed and unequivocal line of C2

from the highest politico-military authority to the lowest SOF unit assigned to conduct a particular SO. BSOF senior representatives should participate in the joint centralized planning of an operation, while the decentralized and detailed planning, coordination, and execution of an individual SO should be a responsibility of the BSOF Command.

To facilitate an effective long-range projection in response to military or asymmetric contingencies, BSOF should be provided with its own or subordinated aerial and maritime assets. Moreover, the successful accomplishment of a SO is facilitated by the latest military and civilian technological inventions; therefore, BSOF should be provided with an independent funding program in order to easily be supplied with the most effective and advanced weapons, communication assets, and special equipment. During deployments under the command of a senior Bulgarian or international conventional component or independently, BSOF should participate with a SO task force comprised of a HQ element and organic SOF units. This set of requirements is a necessary prerequisite for BSOF to be an effective special military asset and a valuable tool in support of Bulgarian national security.

## **2. Implementation of NATO Standards**

NATO membership is a substantial factor for Bulgarian national security. Bulgaria is an integral part of the defense system of the Alliance, and as such, it should receive and provide security in the context of Article 5. For the successful implementation of the defense strategy of NATO, all its members should achieve full operational interoperability through the adoption of allied military standards. In that respect, BSOF should be reorganized in accordance with the requirements stated in Chapter 8 of the Allied Joint Doctrine (AJP)-01 (B). The aforementioned recommendations for improvement of BSOF in accordance with the requirements of Bulgarian national security coincide with the basic principles and standards for SO in AJP-01 (B). This concurrence proves the relevancy of the latter suggestions in regards to BSOF and Bulgarian national security. One of the discords between the Bulgarian CEDESOF and NATO doctrine is the SO missions. Although the list of SO tasks in AJP-01 (B) is shorter than the number of Bulgarian Special Operations, it still contains a task such as military assistance. Alternatively, the Bulgarian concept provides a variety of

tasks, but essential SO missions such as military assistance, unconventional warfare, and counterterrorism are either missing or barely referred to.

For an effective membership in NATO, the Bulgarian military leadership should encourage the development of a new SO doctrine. The doctrine should be adjusted in accordance with the SO standards of the Alliance, and it is recommended that the set of SO tasks be comprised of unconventional warfare, counterterrorism, special surveillance and reconnaissance, direct action, military assistance or foreign internal defense, counter-proliferation of WMD, civil affairs operations, psychological operations, and information operations. Contrary to the latest organizational changes in the Bulgarian Armed Forces, BSOF should develop and maintain a number of units for unconventional warfare, military assistance, psychological operations and civil affairs operations. These tasks represent a critical military approach for dealing with contemporary asymmetric threats; moreover, they could be utilized as an essential national lever for indirect, high or low-profile politico-military influence in the interest of protecting Bulgarian national security. Through implementation of all these recommendations imposed by the requirements of Bulgarian National Security and Military Strategies and NATO standards, BSOF can be a viable military asset for addressing the challenges facing Bulgarian national security and the defense concerns of NATO. Apparently, Bulgaria needs SOF that possesses the following capabilities:

Special operations forces (SOF) have proven invaluable over past decades and have become indispensable in the post-9/11 security environment. They can be used to prevent terrorist attacks, rescue hostages, train foreign forces for unconventional operations, seize critical facilities, scout in hostile territory and forbidding terrain, and pave the way for intervention by regular forces. Such versatility is possible because SOF combine physical fighting prowess with technological dexterity. They can use lasers, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and global positioning system devices to spot enemy targets and then transmit the data to precision-strike air forces. SOF units are light, lethal, small, mobile, and easily networked with other forces. In addition, SOF are uncommonly enterprising and adaptable—important qualities in these fluid and unpredictable times (Gompert & Smith, 2006, p. 1).

## **B. THE WAY AHEAD – WHAT NEXT?**

The proposed solutions and recommendations contained herein are vital for the survival of BSOF as a capable military asset for Bulgarian national security. Such arrangements intertwine the lessons learned from the long historic experience of SOF worldwide and the latest military organizational, operational, and technological achievements adopted by NATO. Considering the proposed changes and by implementing them to BSOF, the Bulgarian politico-military leadership will have the opportunity to test the utility of such an approach. Although national peculiarities matter and should be considered, the suggested model for BSOF will be successful only if the proposed solutions are fully implemented. Furthermore, the reform of BSOF should be encouraged and supported by the political and military leadership of Bulgaria; otherwise, the bureaucratic influence of the involved military organizations may halt and even terminate the suggested military reforms in case they are approved by the politicians. The history of U.S. SOF presents such an example:

. . . [D]eclaring policy – even when it has the force of law – does not ensure its successful or sustainable implementation. The campaign for SOF reform that culminated in the special operations forces reorganization legislation had not yet built the strong special operations capability... USSOCOM and the OASD (SOLIC) would take years to become mature and thriving organization. Most important, it would take nearly four years of “peacetime arrangement” within the Defense Department before the commander in chief of USSOCOM would have the checkbook that would give the SOF autonomy intended by Congress and necessary to secure its future (Marquis, 1997, p. 268).

The transformation of BSOF is an important part of the politico-military activities in support of Bulgarian national security. Moreover, Special Forces possess capabilities that can not be developed in the short run. The expertise for long-range reconnaissance, direct action, subversion, counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, military assistance, psychological and civil affairs operations requires exceptional military professionalism, broad cultural awareness, language skills, and mature experience that requires a long time to be obtained. Therefore, the already developed capabilities by BSOF should be preserved and further elaborated by implementing the proposed reforms. The prolonging of this process will negatively affect not only the potential of BSOF but also Bulgarian

national security. The historic experience and evolution of U.S. SOF identified the following principle truths for special operations forces:

- Humans are more important than hardware.
- Quality is better than quantity.
- Special operations forces cannot be massed produced.
- Competent special operations forces cannot be created after emergencies arise (JP 3-05, 2003, p. II-4).

In the future, BSOF should be appropriately organized, trained and equipped in order to be a significant military pillar for Bulgarian national security. BSOF should be utilized as a cost-effective, high or low-profile, and greatly efficient asset for defending the strategic interests of the state. Moreover, BSOF should be encouraged to develop plans against high-value and critical for national security targets, and the suggested operations should be respectfully considered by the Bulgarian politico-military leadership. The underestimation of the recommendations provided by U.S. SOF for protection of U.S. national security might have been one of the factors which facilitated the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 terrorist attack. Congressman Curt Weldon, a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, testified before the House of Representatives eight months after 9/11:

One year before 9/11, the capability that Special Forces built actually identified to us the network of al-Qaeda. ... And they went beyond that and gave us recommendations where we could take out cells to eliminate their capability. All that activity could have prevented or help to prevent 9/11 from ever occurring (Verton, 2003, p. 169).

As a final, but no less important controversy is the organizational culture of SOF.

Mavericks, critical thinkers, individuals who are capable of conceptualizing innovative tactics, equipment and methodologies that are alien to the conventional wisdom were, and still are, often marginalized. Yet, their ideas and contributions, once properly harnessed and allowed to flourish, provide incredible payback. This is the strength of SOF (Horn, 2005).



BSOF is a military organization which differs from the other services, just like the Army, Air Force, and Navy are distinctive in the Bulgarian Armed Forces. Its cultural characteristics are predetermined by the unique nature of the unconventional employment of SOF units. The successful execution of SO is not defined only by technical operational details and routine training, but also by flexibility, improvisation, and “out-of-the-box” thinking. Therefore, SOF commanders usually do not impose the type of discipline and subordination peculiar to conventional forces, thus encouraging unorthodox ideas. Marquis found that “[t]he critical values of independence, unconventional thinking, and near equality among the members of the small operational teams are often in direct conflict with the values of conventional military forces” (1997, p. 8). The traditions and peculiarities of BSOF create its unique organizational image; that is why it should be understood, accepted, and appreciated by both the military and political leadership of Bulgaria.

### **C. NECESSITY FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

This study lays the basis of an academic discussion on the management and utilization of BSOF. Regrettably, this scholastic glance based on the available open sources referring to BSOF capabilities, the requirements of Bulgarian national security, and NATO standards has identified significant shortfalls. Therefore a set of recommendations for the improvement of BSOF has been put forth. The analysis and proposed recommendations may be limited, but they constitute one of the possible solutions for the future development of BSOF. How valuable these proposals are may only become clear if they are fully implemented by the Bulgarian politico-military leadership.

On the other hand, the Bulgarian government is developing a new Bulgarian National Security Strategy, which is expected to be released in 2007, and as previously mentioned, NATO is creating a new Doctrine for Special Operations – AJP 3.5. Concurrently, the Bulgarian military is also working on a Doctrine for Special Operations. In the near future, numerous changes and developments related to SOF will occur in NATO and Bulgaria. Therefore, further studies according to the developed doctrines and the proposed changes will be required. The significance of this topic is not

accidental. It is inspired not only by the need for change in BSOF, but also by the necessity for enhancing Bulgarian national and global security in response to contemporary threats.

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